

THE ROLES AND MISSIONS OF RANGERS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1996

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19960820 024

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
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1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 7 June 1996	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis, 2 Aug 95-7 June 1996
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  The Roles and Missions for Rangers in the Twenty-First Century		5. FUNDING NUMBERS
6. AUTHOR(S)  Major Chelsea Y. Chae, U.S. Army		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD 1 Reynolds Ave. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-1352		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES  <i>DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4</i>		
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE  A
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  This study examines the historical utility of the Ranger units since World War II. The research concept employs the study of three representative historical examples from World War II, Korea, and Ranger operations during Operation Just Cause. Examination of the utility of Rangers in the future is crucial in this period of reductions in the Army force structure. The study uses a set of five operational Special Operations Forces (SOF) criteria which are modified to suit Ranger operations at all three levels of war, strategic, operational, and tactical. The intent is to determine the factors that contributed to success or failure. This study concludes that Ranger forces bring a unique capability to the battlefield to support national policies and objectives. Although initially conceived and developed as elite infantry, the Rangers have evolved and, in reality, should be considered as a SOF. Given the uncertain nature of future threats, the U.S. cannot afford to rely on an ad hoc unit to perform special, politically sensitive missions. While the Ranger units provide connectivity with conventional forces, their employment as SOF will be key to success and their capabilities will be essential in providing the national command authority with crucial military options.		
14. SUBJECT TERMS  Roles and Missions of Rangers, Operation Just Cause History of Rangers, Ranger Operations		15. NUMBER OF PAGES 108
16. PRICE CODE		
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT  UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE  UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT  UNCLASSIFIED
20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  UNCLASSIFIED		

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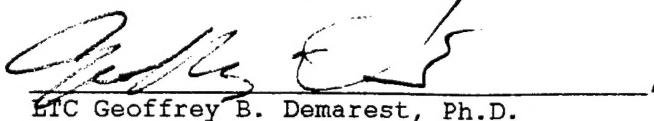
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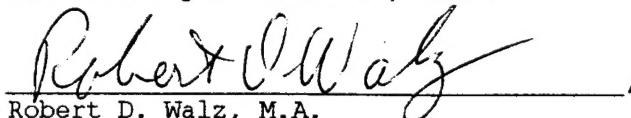
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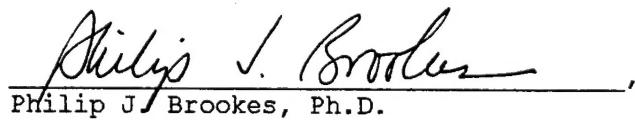
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## ABSTRACT

THE ROLES AND MISSIONS OF RANGERS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY by MAJ  
Chelsea Y. Chae, USA.

This study examines the historical utility of the Ranger units since World War II. The research concept employs the study of three representative historical examples from World War II, Korea, and Ranger operations during Operation Just Cause. Examination of the utility of Rangers in the future is crucial in this period of reductions in the Army force structure. The study uses a set of five operational Special Operations Forces (SOF) criteria which are modified to suit Ranger operations at all three levels of war, strategic, operational, and tactical. The intent is to determine the factors that contributed to success or failure.

This study concludes that Ranger forces bring a unique capability to the battlefield to support national policies and objectives. Although initially conceived and developed as elite infantry, the Rangers have evolved and, in reality, should be considered as a SOF. Given the uncertain nature of future threats, the U.S. cannot afford to rely on an ad hoc unit to perform special, politically sensitive missions. While the Ranger units provide connectivity with conventional forces, their employment as SOF will be key to success and their capabilities will be essential in providing the national command authority with crucial military options.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the people who have contributed so much to this study in many different ways. My wife, Christine, and my two boys, Michael and Joshua, made this study possible by providing an unfailing source of joy. Also, I would not be proudly serving in the U.S. Army today without my father's inspiration and my mother's infinite love. My committee members--Colonel (Retired) William W. Mendel, Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey B. Demarest, and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Robert D. Walz--provided much needed guidance and encouragement throughout my endeavor. The staff of the Combined Arms Research Library did a tremendous service by going out of their way to unearth the critical pieces of documents. Major James Varner provided his well-honed English skills to edit my thesis. I would also like to thank my Academic Counselor/Evaluator (ACE), Lieutenant Colonel David Gatewood, for his enthusiasm and support. Finally, I wish to praise the Lord who gives me the countless blessings that I cannot fully comprehend nor appreciate.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

And is anything more important than that the work of the Soldier should be well done?<sup>1</sup>

Plato, The Republic

In October of 1993, the vivid pictures of Somalis dragging the bodies of dead Rangers through the streets of Mogadishu stunned the American public who, by then, had grown accustomed to comfortable images of victory against Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War in 1991. But this was not the first time Americans experienced the price of high risk operations by a highly trained, professional, and well-equipped elite unit. The Rangers were given a mission without adequate assets, such as heavy weapons or fire support, to compensate for their inherent limitations. Examples like this abound in U.S. military history. What then can be learned from this event? How will the Rangers cope with future conflicts? More importantly, given the increasing likelihood of this type of conflict, how might the U.S. Army employ Ranger forces?

Significance of Study

In an effort to anticipate future changes and retool itself since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Army is undergoing a fundamental review of its roles, structures, and applications of forces as part of this nation's instruments of power. The rise of regional conflicts, absence of a monolithic opposing force, and increasing ethnic

and religious strife are making it difficult for the Army to produce a doctrinal concept. A review of the role and missions of the Rangers in this period of uncertainty and disorder is essential. The examination of roles and missions is more pressing when the military is faced with budget reductions, impending changes to force structure, and persistent challenges for elite units to finding appropriate missions. Hence, this study will attempt to make certain conclusions about the roles and missions of the Rangers in the years to come.

The primary research question: Is the Rangers' organizational concept relevant to the roles and missions needed for the twenty-first century? The secondary questions are as follows: (1) What are the current capabilities of the Rangers? (2) What were the historical roles and missions of Rangers in terms of operations, command and control arrangement, and force structure? (3) What are the unique capabilities of the Rangers? and (4) Are there mission requirements for the Rangers in the future? If so, what roles and missions can the Rangers be assigned?

#### Background

In general terms, the development of Ranger units in American history can be grouped into two distinct periods--from the pre-Revolution era to the Civil War, and from World War II to the present. The Ranger units were absent from the Army between the time they were disbanded at the end of the Civil War until 1942, a dark period for the Allied forces in Europe during World War II. The World War II Rangers were modeled after the British commandos. The designation of units as Rangers stemmed from American reluctance to use a name already in use,

Commandos. Citing this political reason behind the naming of American "commando" units formed during World War II, some military scholars even contend that the link between early rangers and the modern-day Rangers is tenuous at best.<sup>1</sup> But this assertion ignores the fact that these units were established for a specific and similar purpose and shared a set of traits common to all units who bore the "Ranger" designation.

### Early Rangers

The Ranger concept as understood today can be traced back to the American colonial days when hardy, seasoned woodsmen, fiercely independent and skilled in fieldcraft, "ranged" the frontiers to survive. Naturally, a group of these men tended to be difficult to control, lacked discipline, and were restless when inactive. It took a man of strong character to lead an assemblage of intractable men. Then it was not surprising that these early units drew much of their identity from the qualities of their commanders: charisma, courage, presence of mind, skill in fieldcraft, and physical strength. When formed, these units served as escorts for surveyors and searched for escaped slaves, scouts, and raiders.

Institutionalization of Ranger units arguably began with Major Robert Rogers when he "organized and trained nine companies of American Colonists in 1756 during the French and Indian Wars."<sup>2</sup> Since that time, the Ranger concept took various forms in its organization, functions, and relationship to the Regular Army. George Washington, as the commander of the Continental Army during the American Revolution, selected and formed "elite" units to conduct quick, precise raids to achieve tactical victory over more unwieldy British troops.<sup>3</sup> Of those

units, Colonel Daniel Morgan achieved the greatest fame when he used a company of expert marksmen, seasoned in Indian warfare, to raid the British outposts and serve as scouts and flank guards.

During the War of 1812, Congress authorized seventeen volunteer Ranger companies. In 1832, Congress authorized a battalion of "Mounted Rangers" in response to ever-expanding security requirements in the West. By 1860, over seventy militia units used "Ranger" as a name, attesting to its popularity. The most famous Ranger unit during the Civil War was the 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry commanded by John S. Mosby, better known as Mosby's Rangers. Employed as an elite guerrilla unit, it operated behind enemy lines to destroy Union supply trains, capture couriers, and attack outposts to divert Federal troops from the front. Throughout the Civil War, over 428 units on both sides used the name "ranger" as official and unofficial designations. The North generally employed such outfits as infantry or cavalry whereas the South employed them as partisans or guerrillas.<sup>4</sup> Despite apparent popularity of "ranger" units and demonstrated successes, most of the units were disbanded at the end of the Civil War.

#### Modern Rangers

During World War II, five Ranger Battalions were formed for operations in the European Theater in addition to the 6th Ranger Battalion within the U.S. 6th Army in the Pacific. The 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) for the China-India-Burma Theater, 29th Ranger Battalion formed within the 29th Infantry Division (this battalion was short-lived--from 20 December 1942 to 15 October 1943), and the First Special Service Force also saw service in World War II. These units

carried out missions behind enemy lines, conducted daring raids, and participated in amphibious operations at Omaha Beach on D Day. Both the Korean and Vietnam Wars had Ranger units, but with intrinsically different force structure, command arrangement, and missions. In the early 1970s, the Army authorized two Ranger battalions that resembled World War II Ranger units. By the 1980s, the Rangers participated in almost every conflict or operation the Army had conducted.

#### Rangers in World War II: American Commandos

The U.S. Army went without Ranger units in its ranks for over 75 years until the concept was revived in 1942 by General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, as a means of gaining invaluable combat experience for U.S. soldiers. Gravely concerned about the lack of combat experience and heavily pressured by President Roosevelt for action, Marshall directed Colonel Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., to gather information about British combined operations, specifically concentrating on their commando units. The plan was to include U.S. soldiers in raids that the British conducted across the English Channel. The purpose was to expose as many soldiers to combat as possible prior to committing them to impending large-scale operations by U.S. forces. The result was the forming of the 1st Ranger Battalion (Provisional) in June 1942.<sup>5</sup>

The 1st Ranger Battalion was activated at Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland, under Lieutenant Colonel William O. Darby. It consisted of six line companies of three officers and sixty-three enlisted men (Fig. 1). Their equipment was common to all infantry units of that time. In the European Theater of Operations, a total of five

Ranger Battalions (1st Battalion through 5th Battalion) were employed. These Battalions saw combat during Operation TORCH in North Africa, the invasion of Sicily, and the Italian Campaign in support of General George S. Patton, as well as France, and Germany. The 6th Ranger Battalion, formed from the 98th Field Artillery Battalion at Camp Lewis, Washington, was assigned to the Pacific Theater. The 6th conducted a successful rescue operation to retrieve Allied prisoners of war at Cabanatuan in the Philippines. The 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), better known as Merrill's Marauders, was activated in the China-Burma-India theater and saw five major and thirty minor engagements from October 1943 to July 1945. They conducted deep penetrations behind enemy lines for reconnaissance and raids. The Ranger units were inactivated by the close of hostilities following World War II.<sup>6</sup>

The Rangers' contributions to World War II are well documented. They took part in 26 major battles from Arzew, Algeria, to Manila, Philippines. They spearheaded seven invasions from North Africa to Luzon.<sup>7</sup> When they were not used to conduct Ranger type of missions, such as raids or deep reconnaissance, the Rangers saw line infantry duties. Despite their successes, the Army would not see Rangers in its ranks again until 1950 in Korea.

#### Rangers in Korea

When the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950, the U.S. Army was caught totally unprepared. In response to the enemy's devastating use of specialized infiltrating forces, the Army reactivated the Ranger units for the specific purpose of infiltrating enemy lines to conduct raid operations

in the enemy's rear. On 25 August 1950, the Eight Army activated the 8th Army Ranger Company in Japan which was eventually assigned to the 25th Infantry Division. A total of fourteen Ranger companies were formed. Seven were assigned to infantry divisions. All, but the 8th Army Ranger Company, were trained at the Infantry Center, Fort Benning, Georgia. Although these companies executed several doctrinally appropriate missions, such as penetrating behind enemy lines to conduct raids and ambushes, the Ranger companies in Korea were mainly used to spearhead the infantry assaults or were ordered to hold the line at relatively insignificant positions.<sup>8</sup> Numerous studies and combat reports demonstrate the misuse of Rangers in the Korean War. These special units composed of well-trained and highly motivated men were decimated because they were inappropriately employed. Several reasons were cited for the misuse of Ranger units: lack of understanding of Ranger capabilities, limitations inherent in Rangers' force structure, and basic distrust of elite forces.

#### Rangers in Vietnam

During the Vietnam War, several "Ranger" units were activated whose primary missions were long-range reconnaissance and gathering intelligence for the supported force, typically a combat division. Little resembling their Ranger predecessors in Korea and World War II, they were, however, still given the designation of "Rangers." Their organization resembled today's Special Forces teams. The dissimilar nature of missions for Rangers in Vietnam from those of two previous conflicts led to significantly different organizational structures; however, Ranger companies in Vietnam possessed the same characteristics

of the previous Ranger units in that they were made up of a highly motivated, hardy, self-reliant professionals who were always given the most difficult missions.

#### Present Day Rangers

The beginnings of the present Ranger organization began in 1974 with activation of 1st and 2d Battalions, 75th Infantry (Ranger). Only two battalions were active at the time of the invasion of Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury) in 1983. In 1984, the Army activated the Ranger Regimental Headquarters as well as the 3rd Battalion. The current force structure in the Army is one Ranger Regiment consisting of one Regimental Headquarters and three Ranger Battalions. Since 1983, the Rangers have participated in Operation Just Cause (Panama) in 1989, Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1991, Operation Restore Hope (Somalia) in 1993, and most recently in 1994 in Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti). Today's Rangers are expected to

conduct highly complex joint direct action operations in coordination with or in support of other special operations units of all services. Rangers can also execute direct action operations in support of conventional nonspecial operations missions conducted by a combatant commander and *can operate as conventional light infantry when properly augmented with other elements of combined arms.* [italics mine]<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, their role is defined as to

plan and conduct special military operations in support of national policies and objectives. They have the capability to support conventional military operations, or they may conduct operations independently when conventional infantry cannot be used. Ranger units are highly trained and well-disciplined and capable of being employed in any environment.<sup>10</sup>

According to FM 100-5, Operations, the Rangers serve both as a type of infantry and as SOF. Based on these descriptions, the Rangers are a unique strategic and operational force that can also function at the

tactical level with additional support. Although the idea of a versatile Ranger force is attractive and more palatable to those who possess a conventional outlook, the Rangers' attempt to be all things to the supported force has had a disastrous outcome during many conflicts.

In addition to Rangers, the Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) include Special Forces Groups, Psychological Operations Battalions, Special Operations Aviation Group, and Civil Affairs Battalions. The Army is not alone when it comes to having a special operations capability. Other services as well as other countries possess special operations capability.

#### Other Special Operations Forces

As noted earlier, in addition to the Ranger Regiment there are other special operations forces (SOFs) in the U.S. force structure: nine Special Forces Groups, four Psychological Operations Battalions, one Special Operations Aviation Group, seven Sea Air Land (SEAL) teams, two SEAL Delivery Vehicle teams, seven Special Boat Units, three Special Operations Wings, and two Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU-SOC)--the Marines utilize a rotational system where a designated MEU becomes "special operations capable" after having undergone special operations training.<sup>11</sup> Although the MEUs have the SOC designation, their SOF capability is downplayed by the Marine Corps.<sup>12</sup>

At the present time, there are over 350 special operations units in the world. These units take various forms from airborne brigades and divisions to counterterrorist detachments. It is worth noting that several major countries possess and maintain sizable elite forces. Russia has sixteen brigades and three separate regiments of Spetsnaz as

well as four naval Spetsnaz units. The United Kingdom has one regiment of Special Air Service, one Royal Marine Commando, and one Royal Navy Special Boat Squadron. North Korea maintains twenty-five Special Operations brigades (over 100,000 personnel) and five airborne battalions. Germany has one airborne division, three airborne brigades, and Spezial einstz Kommandos.<sup>14</sup>

#### Historical Summary

Several themes are evident throughout the history of Rangers. Ranger operations were largely successful when employed by commanders who considered their capabilities and limitations. During World War II and Korea, the Rangers took a heavy toll when used as a conventional infantry unit. The Rangers were consistently seen as a temporary outfit, disbanded when its usefulness disappeared. Because relative inactivity consistently led to questioning their utility and to problems with discipline, the Rangers were always forced to search for a mission. Most of their efforts led to inappropriate employment at a high cost. Having a doctrinal manual, such as FM 100-5, designating Rangers both as a type of infantry and SOF has further compounded the problem of misuse of Rangers.

The Ranger concept as a form of elite fighting force has experienced a variable existence, forming and disbanding from the Colonial days to present. Regardless of specific reasons or rationale for disbanding Ranger units, the need for an elite unit that is highly motivated and trained for difficult and unique missions has consistently led to their revival. But the critics of Ranger units question their worth by citing problems associated with elitism, political

implications, high cost, draining of quality small-unit leaders from the regular Army, and sometimes, their effectiveness.

The forming of Ranger units has suited various needs of the Army from its early days to present, yet the roles and missions of the Ranger units differed because they were formed to fill critical gaps in the force structure of the period. Their lack of permanence in a standing army seems to suggest that the mission requirements for Rangers had disappeared when they were inactivated. Their employment as conventional infantry also took away their "uniqueness." Despite the recurring challenges to utility of the Rangers, the Ranger Battalions have been in the Army force structure for over twenty-two years, the longest active service of its regimental history. In 1982, the Army created a special operations headquarters to ensure its SOF are properly equipped, trained, and employed. So it is the current Ranger force as a SOF that this study will focus on and analyze.

#### Scope

This thesis will focus on the role and missions of the Rangers since 1974 when the present force structure was established. The historical perspective of Ranger operations, an analysis of the formation and disbanding of units, and the command and control arrangements and force structure will provide a basis on which the focus of the thesis will rest. Three case studies will be used from World War II to present-day Ranger operations to draw some conclusions on proper application of Ranger force. This thesis will analyze the Army's future requirements as outlined in documents, such as the National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, and Training and

Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-5, Force XXI Operations, in operational and strategic terms and will relate these requirements to capabilities of Rangers and appropriate uses.

#### Methodology

There are many ways of looking at the use of an elite force. Normally, the force structure is a result of threat analysis. A mission requirement generates a force requirement. The resulting force is then manned and equipped for specific missions or purpose. Employment guidance is then written for proper employment of the force with deliberately selected capabilities and limitations.

The Army activated the Ranger units in the 1970s in direct response to the increasing worldwide terrorist threat against U.S. interests. The Ranger force was designed for peacetime and low-intensity conflict employment. Since then, the U.S. created other special operations units, such as Delta Force, established in 1977, and integrated special units to a SOF unified command, such as SEAL teams capable of conducting hostage rescue, recovery of sensitive material, and other special operations. In the early 1980s, the concept of Airland Battle was adopted as the Army's warfighting doctrine. Airland Battle effectively integrated SOF operations to conventional forces operations at the mid- and high-intensity conflict. The Rangers had a role in that they were "force-listed" on contingency plans that each regional commander in chief (CINC) produced. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, the Airland Battle doctrine has given way to a yet-to-be-formulated doctrine. As U.S. military forces look to the future, the question now is whether or not the Rangers have a unique role in the

future SOF operations. This study then will determine the unique role of the Ranger force by analyzing its current capabilities and limitations compared to other SOF in the force structure, its historical employment and trends, and the changes or anticipated changes on the battlefield in the near future.

This study will use the modified "SOF Mission Criteria" developed by Special Operations Command, Central Command (SOCENT) to determine SOF requirements in general and Ranger requirements in particular. There are five criteria that were used by SOCENT during Operation Desert Storm to guide the planning and execution of special operations. They were:

1. Is this an appropriate SOF mission?
2. Does it support the CINC's campaign plan?
3. Is it operationally feasible?
4. Are required resources available to execute?
5. Does the expected outcome justify the risk?<sup>15</sup>

Although the SOF criteria have their roots in operational requirements in a theater, they are an appropriate yardstick with which this study will be able to examine historical cases as well as to determine appropriate Ranger missions and roles based on the future threats. The first criterion, "Is this an appropriate SOF mission?" will be changed to, "Does the mission requirement fit the characteristics that are uniquely SOF?" Under this criterion, the desired end state, mission type, time, political consideration, and objective must be considered. The second criterion, "Does it support the CINC's campaign plan?" will be changed to, "Will the mission achieve or contribute to unity of effort?" because a specific campaign plan is

not at issue here. In order to determine operational feasibility, one must consider level of training, size of the force, geographical factors, transportation, deception, and command and control. In order to execute the mission, the SOF must also consider supportability in terms of fire support, intelligence, combat service support, and mobility-maneuverability. The last criterion is crucial since many missions are not conducted simply because the risk is too high or the expected outcome only marginally contributes to the overall strategic or operational objective. SOF will seek and choose high-payoff missions.

Finally, this study will consider the post-Cold War world to identify new and enduring threats and apply the modified "SOF criteria" to make conclusions about the utility and employment of the Ranger force.

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions will be made to conduct this study: The current Ranger structure will not significantly change in the near term. The current global power structure will not significantly change in the near term, i.e., there will not be a rapid emergence of another Soviet-like monolithic power. The Army's senior leadership vision for the Army in the twenty-first century is attainable, and the Army's end state will be reasonably close to its vision.

#### Definition of Terms

The area of Special Operations is constantly evolving. Thus, its lexicon changes as well. This fact alone provides a sufficient source of confusion not to mention the debate over certain definitions and their applications. In this study, most of the terms used are

defined in the joint and Army "how-to-fight" field manuals (FMs). The following definitions are provided for the key terms used in this study:

- Special Operations are operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and para-military forces to achieve military, political, economic, or psychological objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted during peacetime competition, conflict, and war, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, non-special operations forces...Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.<sup>16</sup>
- Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) are Army forces...that are specifically organized, trained and equipped to conduct and support special operations.<sup>17</sup>
- Direct Action Mission (DA): Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions...to seize, destroy, capture, or recover a specified target; or to destroy, capture, or recover designated personnel or material.<sup>18</sup>
- Ranger Support Element (RSE) is a provisional support organization. It consists of elements from TOE and TDA units under the command of the supported Ranger unit's host installation commander. The mission of the RSE is to provide all the CSS needed to onload and deploy a Ranger force from CONUS. The RSE may... be directed to augment in-theater CSS assets.<sup>19</sup>

#### Limitations

This study does not use any classified documents or sources. A substantial portion of the source documents are classified; however, the available sources are adequate to make this study cogent.

#### Delimitations

This thesis will not address current or ongoing issues of proposed changes to the force structure that reflect more of political positioning than the national security strategy and national military strategy process. Conventional forces capabilities and limitations will not be considered. This study will not consider Psychological

Operations and Civil Affairs units. The focus of the study is the Ranger force since 1942 for the historical analysis and the Ranger force since 1974 for the force structure and capabilities and limitations.

A comprehensive analysis requires thorough research into relevant documents. The next chapter of this study will discuss the current state of literature and official and unofficial documents that were helpful in producing this study.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Plato, The Republic, ed. Richard W. Sterling (New York: Norton Publishing Company, 1983), 99.

<sup>2</sup>David W. Hogan Jr., Raiders or Elite Infantry? (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 19.

<sup>3</sup>Geoffrey T. Barker, A Concise History of U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (Tampa: Anglo-American Publishing Company, 1993), 127.

<sup>4</sup>Russel F. Weigley, The American Way of War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 16.

<sup>5</sup>Hogan, 2-5; Jerome J. Haggerty, A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II (New York: Fordham University, 1982), 39.

<sup>6</sup>Hogan, 11-19.

<sup>7</sup>Haggerty, 330.

<sup>8</sup>Barker, 127-128; Lucian K. Truscott, Command Missions: A Personal Story (New York: E.P Dutton, 1954) p. 40; David R. Gray, "The 'First' Rangers in Korea: The Eight Army Ranger Company In Combat, August 1950 - March 1951" (M.A. Thesis, Ohio State University, 1990), 5-15.

<sup>9</sup>Joint Publications 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, (Washington: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1993), GL-18.

<sup>10</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-22.

<sup>11</sup>Michael A. Cuddihy, "Special Operations Forces - Responsive, Capable, and Ready (Research Report, Air War College, May 1990), 44.

<sup>12</sup>MG Thomas L. Wilkerson, USMC, (Speech, CGSC, FT Leavenworth. KS, 8 Aug 95) at CGSC.

<sup>13</sup>Hogan, 118-120.

<sup>14</sup>Roger Beaumont, Special Operations and Elite Units, 1939--1988 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 153-166.

<sup>15</sup>Headquarters, United States Special Operations Command, SOF Mission Criteria. 9 August 1993, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Joint Publications 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), GL-11.

<sup>17</sup>Joint Publications 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, GL-5

<sup>18</sup>Joint Publications 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, GL-9.

<sup>19</sup>U.S. Army, Field Manual 100-25, Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1991), 8-7.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### General

Extensive works have been written about Ranger units, their operations and personalities. The books on Ranger commanders are especially significant in Ranger history since many common characteristics of Ranger units have been attributed to them. Since the Rangers saw action in just about every conflict of the nation, the accounts of their exploits or failures are well documented albeit strewn throughout the publications of broader subjects. Numerous books were personal accounts written not so much as historical analysis but rather as memoirs.

The literature review chapter is divided into four categories: doctrinal development; historical analysis (WW II to Vietnam, Desert One to present); doctrinal documents; and future environment.

#### Doctrinal Development

There are several principle sources that can be considered authoritative. David W. Hogan, Raiders or Elite Infantry? (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1992) provides a balanced view of Rangers and also examines the national tendencies toward elite units of the American military. The book begins by debunking many repeated or generally accepted legends or myths about Rangers. The most useful portion of the book is Hogan's analysis of the use of Ranger companies

during the Korean War. He also gives a descriptive account of early days of "modern" (1974-present) Rangers and concludes that "anti-elitism and orientation toward a mass war among professional soldiers" made it difficult for the Army to develop a clear Ranger concept between World War II and the invasion of Grenada.<sup>1</sup>

Roger Beaumont, Military Elites (Indianapolis, The Bood-Merrill Company, 1974) is an in-depth examination of elite forces in general. Beaumont's study delves into what is currently recognized as military elites' existence and attempts to answer why they thrive in the face of collectivization, how much their values reflect their supported system, and how they can justify avoiding orthodox control and having special access to resources.<sup>2</sup> His description of an elite life-cycle is also helpful.<sup>3</sup>

Eliot A. Cohen, Commandos and Politicians: Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies (Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1978) provides a good deal of information concerning the Ranger concept within the framework of national and strategic goals and objectives. Frank R. Bartnett et. al. (eds), Special Operations in U.S. Strategy (Washington, D.C., National Defense University Press, 1984), Zeb B. Bradford, Jr., and Frederic J. Brown, The United States Army in Transition (Beverly Hills, California, Sage Publications, 1973), and Ross S. Kelly, Special Operations and National Purpose (Lexington, Massachusetts, D.C. Heath and Company, 1989) examine the role of special operations in their contemporary settings.

Joel Nadel's Special Men and Special Missions: Inside American Special Operations Forces, 1945 to the Present (Pennsylvania, Stackpole Books, 1994) examines the role of special operations forces from World

War II to the 1990s. Although the focus of the book is on Army special forces and special operations elements of the Navy and Air Force, the book contains a set of "lessons-learned" which is organized to cover a major conflict or a period of transition. The author adequately supports his prediction of an ever increasing role for special operations forces "in the next century," but his use of lofty phrases such as "betterment of mankind" and "visionary leadership" taints his impartiality.

There are several related works published as master's theses or doctoral dissertations. The works are mentioned here in a chronological order since they reflect the doctrinal thoughts and trends at the time of publication: Charles D. McMillin, Roles and Missions of Airborne, Ranger, and Special Forces in Contingency Operations (US Army Command and General Staff College, 1979); Glenn M. Harned, Army Special Operations Forces and Airland Battle (US Army Command and General Staff College, 1985); Michael M. Kershaw, The Integration of Special Operations and General Purpose Forces (Monterey, Naval Postgraduate School, December 1994).

#### Historical Analysis

There are several sources that provide historical information concerning Ranger origins, organizations, and operations. John R Cuneo, Robert Rogers of the Rangers (New York, Oxford University Press, 1959) is a biography of Rogers. The primary sources for the book are credible personal accounts, public records of the time, and Rogers' journals and book. The book provides a detailed account of the Rangers' beginning as Cuneo recounts the exploits of Major Robert Rogers, who is credited with

first institutionalization of Ranger units in the American colony. Cuneo's work puts a personal face on accounts of Rogers' exploits during the French-Indian War. The book also highlights the distinctive and diametrical characteristics that made Rangers so effective as a special mission unit but ill-suited for a long-standing military unit.

The following are good sources for how the Ranger concept was revived after so many decades during World War II: William O. Darby and William H. Baumer, Darby's Rangers: We Led The Way (Presidio, Presidio Press, 1980); Jerome J. Haggerty, a History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II (Ph.D. Dissertation, Fordham University, 1982); Michael J. King, William Orlando Darby: A Military Biography and William Orlando Darby: Ronald L. Lane, Rudder's Rangers; James Altieri, The Spearheaders: A Personal History of Darby's Rangers; and Luscian K. Truscott, Jr., Command Missions: A Personal Story. These books provided invaluable insight to reasons and the thought process that preceded the beginnings of the modern day Rangers during World War II.

For the operation at Cabanatuan, the following books were helpful: Forrest Bryant Johnson, Hour of Redemption: The Ranger Raid on Cabanatuan; Jerome J. Haggerty, A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II; William B. Breuer, The Great Raid on Cabanatuan: Rescuing the Doomed Ghosts of Bataan and Corregidor; and David W. Hogan, Jr., U.S. Army Special Operations In World War II.

The Rangers' lot during the Korean War was less than remarkable. Several works have been written that address misuse of Rangers in Korea. David R. Gray, The "First" Rangers in Korea, (Ohio State University, 1990) examines perhaps the only appropriate employment of Rangers in Korea. Gray's thesis details the Eighth Army Ranger Company's

operations from August 1950 through March 1951. Robert W. Black, Rangers in Korea (New York, Ballantine Books, 1989) provides personal accounts of Ranger operations as well as official documents, such as the Eighth Army Monograph, battle records, and operational capabilities memorandum.

For Operation Just Cause, Thomas Donnelly and others, Operation Just Cause (Lexington Books, 1991), and Edward M. Flanagan, Battle for Panama (Brassey's, 1993), provide a basis for thesis research.

#### Doctrinal Documents

The source documents in this category are primarily military publications. The current official documents promulgated by the 75th Ranger Regiment were the source documents for current missions, capabilities, limitations, and organizational data. Since these documents state what the Rangers can and cannot do from the doers' viewpoint, they provide a basis from which the future roles and missions can be extrapolated. "Operational Concept for The Ranger Force" dated 2 December 1992 details how the Ranger force is employed as it exists today. The document identifies the Ranger operational and strategic missions and sub-unit tasks. The 75th Ranger Regiment Mission Essential Task List (METL) enumerates a comprehensive set of tasks for the Ranger Regimental units. Modification Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) dated 16 June 1995 lists all authorized equipment and personnel. The previous TOEs and MTOEs in the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, were helpful in illustrating particular trends in force size and types of equipment. Other Army field manuals

(FMs) were used to define, describe, and identify roles, missions, and doctrine for Ranger forces.

#### Future Environments

Important to anticipating the future force requirements and force structure is an understanding of potential threats to our nation and its vital interests. Spurred on by the demise of a superpower and by technological revolution, the works that deal with future changes and prescribed coping mechanisms abound.

Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, Force XXI Operations (Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1 August 1994), is the main source document describing the Army's concept for future operations. The understanding of the new "Threat Spectrum Model" is useful in formulating future requirements for special operations forces. The envisioned future battlefield is different in that technological advances would radically improve battle space awareness and information process capability.

Bruce Hoffman, Commando Raids: 1946-1983 (Santa Monica, Rand Corporation, 1985), is a statistical examination by Rand Corporation of direct action missions during a period which spans almost four decades. The study specifically examines one hundred raids conducted by special operations units from various countries. The effectiveness of the raids was analyzed by using six factors: level of training, geographical factors, transportation, types of operation, size of raiding parties, and the role of disguise and deception. This study was useful in predicting what would be feasible in the future for the forces conducting direct action.

Avin Toffler's Powershift and War And Anti-War provide a vision of the future where familiar power framework and daily dynamics of the society within a political border and across it. Toffler contends that the next phase of the civilization will be marked by the shift of relationship between violence, knowledge, and wealth which will drastically alter the familiar societal structure and world order. The understanding of violence which enables the Army to identify the threat and the concept of wealth (thereby defining vital interest of a nation) resulting from the anticipated changes are crucial in crafting future roles and missions and force structure for the Rangers.

Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>David W. Hogan Jr., Raiders or Elite Infantry? (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 235.

<sup>2</sup>Roger Beaumont, Special Operations and Elite Units, 1939--1988 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 2.

<sup>3</sup>Beaumont, 171-184.

CHAPTER III  
COMPARISON OF RANGER AND SPECIAL FORCES

There were those among them for whom this stern life had a fascination that made all other existence tame.<sup>1</sup>

Francis Parkman, Robert Rogers of the Rangers

General Description

The U.S. Army maintains three Ranger battalions and a regimental headquarters. The 1st Ranger Battalion is located at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia; the 2d Ranger Battalion is stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington; the 3d Ranger Battalion and the Regimental headquarters are located at Fort Benning, Georgia. The 1st and 2d Ranger Battalions were activated in 1974, and the 3d Ranger Battalion and the Regimental headquarters were activated in 1984. The Ranger Regiment is assigned to the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The Special Forces units are assigned to USASOC as well. Currently, there are nine Special Forces Groups (SFGs). The table below shows the locations and regional orientations of the active Special Forces Groups. The 11th and 12th SFGs are in the Army Reserve component and the 19th and 20th are in the National Guards.<sup>2</sup>

Capabilities and Limitations

The Ranger battalions are "specifically trained, equipped, and configured to rapidly deploy and conduct special operations worldwide."<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 1  
SPECIAL FORCES GROUP LOCATIONS AND REGIONAL ORIENTATION

UNIT	LOCATION	REGIONAL ORIENTATION
1ST SFG	FORT LEWIS, WA	PACIFIC & EASTERN ASIA
3RD SFG	FORT BRAGG, NC	CARIBBEAN & WESTERN AFRICA
5TH SFG	FORT CAMPBELL, KY	SOUTHWEST ASIA & NORTHEASTERN AFRICA
7TH SFG	FORT BRAGG, NC	CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA
10TH SFG	FORT CARSON, CO	EUROPE & WESTERN ASIA

As this study will show in the discussion about the personnel, the Ranger force structure was specifically designed to put a sufficient and decisive number of shooters on the objective rapidly to accomplish the mission. Ranger Regiment's documents state that the Ranger battalions have the following capabilities: deploying at least one battalion on short notice with all equipment to a Remote Marshaling Base (REMAB) and, or, Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) for mission execution; operating under very restrictive environment with political sensitivity; conducting a show of force in any area of the world to demonstrate U.S. interest or resolve; serving as a forced entry force in conjunction with other forces in a nonpermissive or semipermissive environment; providing other SOF freedom to operate; conducting direct action missions; and conducting NEO or protecting property abroad.<sup>4</sup>

A Ranger Battalion is capable of independent operations for a limited period. As such, the battalion mission essential task list provides a succinct but complete list of Ranger missions:

1. Perform airfield seizure
2. Perform raid
3. Perform airborne assault
4. Perform air assault

5. Defend

6. Perform relief in place<sup>5</sup>

Much time and effort have been spent in the Ranger community discussing the "defend" mission. The most acceptable position for the author is that the Rangers perform "hasty defense," which is appropriate for their capabilities. These tactical missions are routinely conducted in the strategic and operational context. What makes the missions and capabilities unique is the SOF characteristics of operations.

The Ranger's capabilities have evolved from general ability to operate in enemy rear areas. Today, the Ranger battalions are capable of and expected to do more than conduct raids behind enemy lines. To fulfill these expectations, the Ranger battalions must be able to conduct missions requiring violent and precise execution but also retain the ability to bridle lethality when necessary.

#### Limitations

The Ranger force has several limitations. Its characteristics of light infantry also impose several limitations. It possesses a limited capability against armored/motorized units in open terrain. For an antiarmor capability, Ranger units are equipped with a medium, man-portable antiarmor/antipersonnel weapon system. Due to the strategic nature of its missions, the Ranger force requires strategic level intelligence support and real-time intelligence, both of which require resource-intensive support architecture. The fire support capability is extremely limited to lightweight, man-portable systems, and the Ranger force is heavily dependent on Army, Air Force, Navy, and other SOF assets for additional fire support. It has limited tactical transport

capabilities consisting typically of medical, communications, and weapons platforms. Its air defense capabilities are limited to man-portable systems, such as Stinger missiles. When the force is deployed, it requires mission support from other military services and nonmilitary agencies. The Ranger force typically deploys with five days of sustainment. It requires prudent mission assignment since the Army personnel replacement system cannot rapidly reconstitute the Ranger force. It requires support for all foreign language requirements if operating in the Combined and Coalition environments.<sup>6</sup>

#### Special Forces

In general, the role of Special Forces (SF) are described in three broad categories: war, conflict, and peace. SF is designed "to plan, conduct, and support Special Operations in any operational environment and across the operational continuum."<sup>7</sup> SF units have five primary missions: unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), direct action (DA), and counterterrorism (CT). Of these missions, this study focuses on SF's capability to conduct DA and CT missions.

The capabilities of SF relating to DA and CT are as follows:

- Infiltrate and exfiltrate specified areas by air, land, or sea.
- Survive and operate in remote areas and hostile environments for extended periods of time with minimum external direction and support.
- Recover friendly personnel from remote or hostile areas.
- Plan and conduct deep penetration missions to include:
  - Attack of critical strategic targets.
  - Collection of intelligence.
  - Strategic target acquisition.
  - Selected independent operations of a sensitive or critical nature when directed by higher authority.<sup>8</sup>

Based on these capabilities, the missions of SF would only differ from the missions assigned to the Rangers in terms of differences in force structure and employment concept. As it will be shown in such an example as the raid on Cabanatuan by the 6th Ranger Battalion, the role of SF would complement but not compete with the Ranger capabilities.

#### Personnel and Structure

The Ranger force is organized as a regiment of three battalions. Given what the Ranger force is expected to accomplish, the focus of the study now must turn to examining the personnel, organization, equipment, and training that exist today in a Ranger battalion. The study will also look at the unique and disparate training opportunities of the Ranger battalion that sets it apart from other infantry battalions. The Army must consider what it can do and cannot do in order to identify appropriate combat tasks for them. A Ranger battalion is organized not unlike an airborne infantry battalion assigned to an airborne division. However, key differences exist in force structure, training, logistics, and personnel composition.

The Ranger battalion is authorized 42 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 536 enlisted soldiers. The battalion is organized into three rifle companies composed of six officers and 146 enlisted soldiers and a battalion headquarters section and headquarters company. Each rifle company consists of three rifle platoons, a company headquarters, and a weapons platoon.<sup>9</sup>

A Ranger battalion has a large proportion of "shooters." Of 536 enlisted soldiers, 396 are infantrymen (74 percent), 30 are mortarmen, 28 are forward observers, 18 are medical specialists, and 26 are of

communications specialties. The remaining 41 (8 percent) hold military occupation specialties (MOS) in combat support and combat service support field.<sup>10</sup> This personnel composition points to the offensive nature of Rangers operations and a conscious decision to retain a high tooth-to-tail ratio during Ranger operations. The advantage gained by more shooters on the ground is also the reason for one of limitations--sustainability.

The personnel that make up the Ranger battalion are not ordinary. The enlisted soldiers are commonly referred to as "triple" volunteers. They volunteered to join the Army. They then volunteered for airborne training. They further volunteered for a Ranger assignment. After completing twelve weeks of basic and advanced individual training, they are required to complete a three-week airborne course. Once at the Ranger Regiment, they are further required to complete a three-week Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP) which is designed to continue their development of individual skills and Ranger operations. This program also serves as a quality control mechanism to ensure high physical and mental standards are met prior to soldiers' assignment to their serving unit.

Officers are also selected based on stringent standards. Officers assigned to the Ranger Regiment possess a wealth of experience, and they are highly qualified in their fieldcraft as it is one of the selection criteria. The Ranger Regimental Commander personally selects officers, captains and higher, as well as closely monitoring the selection process of lieutenants. Officers and senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are required to undergo an incisive psychological profile evaluation to determine their suitability and reliability.

Successful prior company command in a conventional infantry unit is a prerequisite for Ranger company command just as battalion commanders are repeat commanders.

Noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are selected by the Regimental Commander and command sergeant major, the senior enlisted soldier. Manning of NCO and enlisted positions is maintained at full strength with statistical overage of certain MOSSs in order to enable the Ranger battalion to deploy with full authorized strength in spite of normal administrative and bureaucratic requirements, such as training schools, temporary medical nondeployable soldiers, that would normally keep other units from being able to field their authorized strength.

The Ranger Regiment sees few disciplinary problems since those assigned are generally motivated and well-trained volunteers. Another reason for the success is that the Regimental Commander has the summary release authority over soldiers who do not meet the standard for various reasons. Causes for release are: a lack of motivation in training, failure to meet the physical fitness standards, or violations of Army regulations. High grooming and appearance standards also make them stand out in public and tend to instill more pride in their unit.

SF units are made up of twelve-men Special Forces Operational Detachment-A (SFOD-A). Unlike Rangers, there are no junior enlisted men in "A teams." SF officers are "accessed" to the SF branch only after their initial assignment in another branches, generally combat arms branches. The noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are highly trained in specific skills and cross trained to be versatile.<sup>11</sup> Hence, there is an appreciable difference in focus and leadership style. Perhaps the best description of different focus is given by Alfred Paddock who stated:

With the impetus of the Korean War, the heightening cold war tensions, and the persistent pressures of Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr., the Army moved in late 1950 to create an unprecedented staff organization - the office of the Chief of Psychological and unconventional warfare. . . . Despite a "hot war" in Korea, the primary influence behind the Army's interest in unconventional warfare was the desire for a guerrilla capability in Europe to help "retard" a Soviet invasion, should it occur. . . . [T]he unit that emerged was clearly designed to organize, train, and support indigenous personnel in behind-the-lines resistance activities, and it was based primarily on Donovan's OSS Operational Group concepts--not those of the Rangers or Commandos.<sup>12</sup>

Today's SF obviously has expanded from original operational concepts; however, the emphasis on special operations is still key.

#### Equipment

The dominating fire power of the Ranger battalion is apparent compared to an SF team when we examine the organic weapons of each. The Ranger battalion's organic major weapons consist of the following: sixteen 84 millimeter RAAWS, six 60 millimeter mortars, twenty-seven M240G machine guns, and fifty-four M249 (5.56 millimeter) Squad Automatic Weapons (SAW).<sup>13</sup> Although the Ranger battalion has increased its antiarmor capability since the 1980s (it had nine 90 millimeter recoilless rifles and nine Dragon missile trackers), its capability still is austere compared to an airborne battalion. Contrasting this to an SF team that has no heavy weapons other than a 50 caliber sniper system, it is evident that SF's limited fire power reflects the types of missions the SF conduct.<sup>14</sup> However, SF teams are trained to operate heavy weapons when required.

#### Vehicles

The Ranger battalion has no organic vehicles to provide tactical mobility. Aside from contracted vehicles and five high mobility

multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) for its battalion headquarters and mess section, the battalion wholly relies on transportation support provided by home station support units in peacetime and the Ranger Support Element (RSE) which consists of installation support units tasked by Forces Command (FORSCOM) designed to deploy on short notice to provide logistical support during contingency operations. The logistical concept for midintensity conflict or higher had not been formulated as this study was in preparations.

#### Communications Equipment

One area in which the Ranger battalion saw much improvement in the past two decades is in communications. The Ranger battalion has four tactical satellite radios as well as two satellite base stations. It is authorized 112 pieces of frequency modulation (FM), high frequency (HF), and ultrahigh frequency (UHF) radios for tactical and operational purposes.<sup>11</sup> The Ranger battalion has considerable communications capability made possible through off-the-shelf acquisition of the state-of-the-art equipment under SOCOM's Major Force Program (MFP)<sup>11</sup> for Special Operations.

#### Training

The Ranger Regiment enjoys higher priorities in training resources and budget than other conventional units, such as the 82nd Airborne Division. The result is clear, but greater resources alone cannot produce a highly lethal strike force. The regiment executes an extremely effective training program that consistently produces a combat ready unit. Live-fire training is an integral part of training at every level. Training is evaluated using a systematic, tough and well-defined

standards based on Army Training Evaluation Program (ARTEP) 7-8-Mission Training Plan (MTP) and ARTEP 7-10-MTP, and retraining is built in to the training schedule.<sup>15</sup>

An ambitious training program, such as this requires fewer training distracters and more resources than a conventional infantry unit is allocated. The Ranger Regiment has a higher priority than most units on post for training facilities or training areas. If a conflict of schedule exists, the regiment relies on its training budget to deploy to locations where training areas and facilities are available. The Ranger battalions also do not perform post support activities, such as post guard, ROTC support, installation cleanup, and other such tasks. They are able to train year round except for thirty days set aside for block leave.

The Ranger battalions have requirements to maintain unit proficiency in operating in various environments:

TABLE 2  
UNIT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS<sup>16</sup>

FREQUENCY	REQUIREMENT
Every 24 months	Cold Weather Operations Training
Every 24 months	Waterborne Operations Training
Every 18 months	Jungle Training
Every 18 months	Desert Training
Every 18 months	Mountain Training
Every 12 months	Joint Readiness Exercise
Every 12 months	Joint Training Exercise

Source: Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, RTC 350-1, Battalion Training Circular (15 October 1992), 3-d-1.

In addition to the above deployments to maintain proficiency, the Ranger battalions maintain much higher frequency of live-fire exercises. Combined, the deployment schedule and intensive and extensive live-fire

training provide the Rangers a level of realism not normally matched in other infantry units.

#### Conclusions

This austere, light strike force is capable of responsive execution of strategic and operational missions which may have a high price for failure. The soldiers who make up the Ranger battalion are highly motivated and well trained. The Ranger battalion does not have sustaining power on the ground but retains flexibility to rapidly "plug" into employing headquarters' service support assets. The quality of the soldiers in the Ranger battalions, intense and realistic training, and force structure can be reasonably expected to produce "a higher probability of success than could be expected of a standard light infantry battalion."<sup>17</sup> This highly adaptable force is well suited for currently assigned missions.

SF units are characterized by flexibility and versatility. They are expected to perform a variety of missions which are inherently different. Due to the size of the independent teams, they are ill-suited for those DA missions which are typically conducted by the Rangers. As the doctrinal manuals state, Rangers and SF units complement each other with but a few overlapping tasks.

Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>John R. Cuneo, Robert Rogers of the Rangers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 279.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-25, Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1991), 4-21.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Army, 75th Ranger Regiment, "Operational Concept for the Ranger Force" (FT Benning, GA: Department of the Army, 2 December 1992), 4.

<sup>4</sup>Operational Concept, 4-6.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Army, 75th Ranger Regiment, "75th Ranger Regiment Mission Essential Task List (METL)" (FT Benning, GA: Department of the Army, 13 July 1995), 2.

<sup>6</sup>Operational Concept, 2.

<sup>7</sup>FM 100-25, 7-1.

<sup>8</sup>Charles D. McMillin, Roles and Missions of Airborne, Ranger, and Special Forces in Contingency Operations (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1979), 52-53.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. Modification Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) for 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions, 75th Ranger Regiment, 07085LSP01, June 1995.

<sup>10</sup>MTOE, 9.

<sup>11</sup>McMillin, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup>Glenn M. Harned, "Army Special Operations Forces and Airland Battle" (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 38.

<sup>13</sup>MTOE, 11.

<sup>14</sup>Turner, 27.

<sup>15</sup>Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, RTC 350-1, Battalion Training Circular (15 October 1992), 2-1.

CHAPTER IV  
DOCTRINAL EVOLUTION

Gideon took the men down to the water, and the Lord told him "Separate everyone who laps up the water with his tongue like a dog, from everyone who gets down on his knees to drink". The Lord said to Gideon, "I will rescue you and give you victory . . . with the three hundred men."<sup>1</sup>

Judges, 7:5-7

From Rogers' Rangers to Commandos to SOF

The mission of the Ranger Regiment is "to plan and conduct special military operations in support of U.S. policy and objectives."<sup>2</sup> To this end, the Ranger Regiment and Battalions are structured as light infantry organizations to facilitate rapid deployment with an emphasis on utmost proficiency in light infantry skills. The Ranger units recruit high quality volunteers who are physically tough and highly motivated. When General Creighton Abrams, Chief of Staff of the Army, directed formation of the 1st Battalion in 1973, he charged "the battalion to be an elite, light, and the most proficient infantry battalion in the world. A battalion that can do things with its hands better than anyone. . . . Wherever the battalion goes, it must be apparent that it is the best."<sup>3</sup> (See fig. 3.) General Abrams considered the Ranger force to be a standard bearer. The Rangers would show other infantry units in the U.S. Army and around the world that a highly trained unit can meet or exceed standards once thought unattainable.

By the time the regiment was activated, the Army saw the role of the Ranger force in a slightly different way. This view was best expressed by General John Wickham, Chief of Staff of the Army, in his Charter to the regiment. "The Ranger Regiment will draw its members from the entire Army--after service in the Regiment--return these men to the line units of the Army with the Ranger philosophy and standards. . . . The Regiment will experiment with new equipment to include off-the-shelf items and share results with the light infantry community."<sup>4</sup> (See fig. 4.) The Ranger force was tasked to cross fertilize the Army with its high standards and superior leadership.

It was not until the early 1990s that the role and mission were articulated for which the Ranger force was used since 1980 as in Operation Eagle Claw to rescue the American hostages in Iran. In his Charter for the Rangers, General Gordon R. Sullivan, Chief of Staff of the Army, directed that the regiment "serve as the connectivity between the Army's conventional and special operations forces" and provide "the National Command Authority with a potent and responsive strike force continuously ready for worldwide deployment. The Regiment must remain capable of fighting anytime, anywhere, against any enemy, and winning."<sup>5</sup> (See fig. 5.) Today, the Ranger Regiment is a SOF strike force capable of conducting strategic and operational missions worldwide. It is capable of deploying on short notice, conducting infiltration by land, sea, or air, and performing special operations.<sup>6</sup> The road on which the Rangers traveled began with World War II.

#### The Ranger Raid on Cabanatuan

No incident of the campaign in the Pacific has given me such satisfaction as the release of

the POWs at Cabanatuan. The mission was brilliantly successful.<sup>6</sup>

General Douglas MacArthur, The Great Raid on Cabanatuan

#### Background

By 1944, as Allied forces island-hopped their way across the Pacific to cut off Japan's lines of communication to its "Southern Resources Area," the liberation of the Philippines Islands was ever closer to reality for General MacArthur and his Southwest Pacific Command forces. Over time, his vow of return to the Philippine people had become a moral covenant. MacArthur had planned to make the first thrust in the central Philippines and capture and clear Japanese forces on Leyte and western Samarancus. After taking Luzon, the main island would come next. For this task, the U.S. Sixth Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, would have the lead.<sup>7</sup>

Part of the U.S. Sixth Army was the 6th Ranger Battalion. Officially activated on 28 September 1944, the battalion was initially constituted as the 98th Field Artillery Battalion in December 1940 at Fort Lewis, Washington. The battalion began its Ranger training in April 1944 near Port Moresby in New Guinea.<sup>8</sup> Lieutenant General Krueger's initial concept was for Rangers to conduct amphibious operations spearheading to capture key terrain, and conducting long range patrols and deep penetrations behind enemy lines.<sup>9</sup>

On 17 October 1944, as the preinvasion force for the invasion of Leyte, Rangers assaulted three islands, Dinagat, Homohon, and Guiuan, to clear Japanese forces and set up navigation lights for the assault ships. This mission was the first for the 6th Ranger Battalion since they started their training in May. During the three-day operation, the

Rangers killed over 700 Japanese and destroyed several radio installations.<sup>10</sup> Their subsequent missions were establishing a radar station on Santiago Island, guarding 6th Army Headquarters, providing a security force for the advance echelon of the 6th Army, patrolling hills to clear Japanese forces, night patrolling for 6th Army G2, and infiltrating behind enemy lines to conduct reconnaissance.<sup>11</sup> The historical evidence shows that the 6th Ranger Battalion successfully conducted those missions for which they were established.

The most successful mission of the 6th Ranger Battalion came relatively early in its life. The raid on the Cabanatuan prisoner-of-war (POW) camp twenty-five miles behind enemy lines on 30 January 1945 resulted in a successful rescue of 516 Allied prisoners at the cost of two friendly casualties. The enemy suffered 1,275 killed, three tanks and three trucks destroyed.<sup>12</sup>

As the 6th Army drove the Japanese north on Luzon, the concern for the Allied prisoners from Battaan and other areas took on a more urgent tone. At the time of the raid, 6th Army forces were generally situated along the line formed by the towns, Aliaga, Quezon, Casanova-Manacsac, and Guimba.<sup>13</sup> Rumors were rampant as to the fate of those prisoners in Japanese hands. A possibility of Japanese forces either transporting them out of the Philippines or worse, executing the prisoners prior to their withdrawal was closer to reality. Since the Japanese occupation, the guerrillas operating in the Cabanatuan region had known and tracked the prisoners in their area of operations. The 6th Army intelligence estimated that there were at least 300 prisoners at Pangatian, a village between Cabanatuan and Cabu. On 26 January, Lieutenant General Krueger was briefed on the proposed rescue mission

and on 27 January, the 6th Ranger Battalion was given the order to execute the raid on 29 January.<sup>14</sup>

The Rangers departed Calasio, Sixth Army Headquarters, on 28 January. At Guimba, 6th Army's forward most position, the Rangers moved cross-country on foot over 25 miles to reach the POW camp. The raid was to take place on 29 January but LTC Mucci, commander of the 6th Ranger Battalion, postponed the raid twenty-four hours for tactical reasons. At 1945 hours, 30 January, Company C reinforced with one platoon from Company F assaulted the compound. Within thirty minutes, Japanese security forces were killed and all prisoners evacuated. Using carabao carts, the Rangers transported the prisoners safely back to Guimba (fig. 6 and fig. 7).<sup>15</sup>

#### The Raid and the SOF Criteria

By January 1945, Japanese forces were withdrawing in the face of 6th Army's advance. Along with their withdrawal, it was feared that the Japanese would evacuate the Allied prisoners soon. If a rescue attempt was to be made, it would have had to be launched quickly. A conventional force not specially trained for demanding raid operations would not have sufficed.

Under the first SOF criterion, the suitability of the mission needs to be determined. The fate of the Allied prisoners was closely tied to several considerations under the suitability criterion-- political consideration, time, mission type, and desired end-state.

As the momentum swung to the Allies in the Pacific by 1944, Japan was forced to go on the strategic defensive. The Allied retaking of the Philippines prompted the Japanese to move Allied prisoners out of

the Philippines to China and Japan. Although no evidence exists in the war records, the prisoners not rescued could have at best become bargaining chips later or subject of Japan's reprisals at worst. The first successful rescue of prisoners in the Philippines would have sent a clear message that signaled a turning point in the Philippines.

This study will next consider the type of mission that would have satisfied the requirement. The answer to what kind of mission was needed was obvious. But who best can perform a rescue mission? The Alamo Scouts, conventional forces and the guerrillas were considered. These forces, however, did not possess the capability. The Alamo Scouts was not organized for a large-scale rescue mission. A conventional force had neither the capability to infiltrate nor the capability to rescue. The ability for the guerrillas to bring to bear an overwhelming force for a precision task was questionable at best. The Rangers possessed the unique capability to execute the mission. The 6th Ranger Battalion had the training and organization for tasks that required precision and swift execution. And in order to evacuate the prisoners, most of whom were expected to be invalids or nonambulatory, exceptional physical strength and endurance were required.

The prison camp was about thirty miles behind enemy lines. Conventional operations to attack toward the camp would have provided sufficient time for Japanese forces to evacuate the prisoners. Only stealth, speed, and surprise would have allowed the safe retrieval of the Allied prisoners before nearby Japanese forces could react. The mission had to be conducted almost immediately with best possible planning that twenty-four hours would allow. The 6th U.S. Army issued

the mission order on 27 January, and the 6th Ranger Battalion departed friendly lines on 28 January.<sup>16</sup>

The timing of the mission was also significant. Although the Filipino guerrillas felt that the rescue of 3,000 prisoners from Cabanatuan in early 1944 was certainly possible, General MacArthur, the Southwest Pacific Commander, had other priorities.<sup>17</sup> The rescue mission in 1944 would not have contributed to unity of effort prior to the retaking of the Philippines.

The 6th Ranger Battalion underwent "Ranger" training for a period of six months prior to their initial employment. They had an additional three months prior to the Cabanatuan mission. While their "train-up" was short compared to today's standards, the Battalion had been a cohesive unit for several years. When the 98th Field Artillery Battalion was redesignated as the 6th Ranger Battalion, most men volunteered to stay. Thus, there was no need for the Battalion to devote much effort to build cohesion as one would with all volunteer force without a core group. By the mission time, the 6th Ranger Battalion achieved a high level of training.

The prisoner camp was situated in the area which saw heavy enemy traffic along the highway between Cabanatuan and Cabu toward Rizal as well as the secondary roads. The intelligence reports indicated that considerable Japanese forces were at Cabanatuan, at Pangatian and enroute to Rizal. An estimate numbered Japanese forces between hundreds and a few thousand. Only a small force suitable for infiltration could have made it to the objective in time without generating enemy resistance which could have thwarted the rescue.<sup>18</sup>

The operation was not unilateral. In addition to the Rangers who only numbered 122 soldiers, the Alamo Scouts, 547th Night Fighter Squadron, Filipino guerrillas, and local villagers supported the operation. The total number of combatants was 375 at the time of the mission. The Alamo Scouts were formed in New Guinea by the Sixth Army at the direction of General MacArthur. They were to penetrate enemy lines, perform long-range reconnaissance, and provide accurate intelligence on Japanese forces. A team of one officer and four to five enlisted men operated independently of conventional forces. They were specially selected and trained at the Alamo Scouts Training Center on Fergusson Island in New Guinea. In fact, the name, "Alamo Scouts" referred to the training center and no unit designation was given.<sup>19</sup> The Scouts resembled today's Special Forces teams.

The U.S. 547th Night Fighter Squadron supported the operation with P-61, Black Widows. The first role was deception as one P-61 flew low-level to distract the Japanese soldiers. As the raiding force withdrew, other P-61s provided air cover by interdicting armored vehicles or troop movements along the road to the rear of the Ranger formation.<sup>20</sup>

Geographical relationships between the objective, departure point, and the infiltration routes were noteworthy. The method of infiltration by a small force was selected because of considerable presence of Japanese forces in the area. Although the Rangers were able to launch from a relatively proximate location, a thirty-mile cross-country movement through the hostile territory equated to a much longer movement. Initially, the air superiority the 6th Army enjoyed was of little value to the Rangers with the exception of a P-61 for deception.

The command and control arrangement contributed to their success. The Ranger Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mucci, reported directly to 6th Army Headquarters which maximized planning, coordination, and support. Communications architecture had no layers except for the relay station near the front lines at Guimba. Although only one reinforced Ranger company was used for the mission, the Battalion Commander commanded the force. At the mission time, Lieutenant Colonel Mucci had over 375 men under his control, the composition of which is already mentioned.<sup>21</sup> It was crucial that he was allowed flexibility which was not normally given to an infantry battalion. Mucci's decision to postpone the "H-hour" (the commencement of the mission) by twenty-four hours without an explicit approval reflected the kind of command and control that would be required for units such as the 6th Ranger Battalion.

As mentioned previously, there were a number of assets that supported the Rangers' mission. From the Alamo Scouts to sympathetic locals, the Rangers received ample assistance. In order to transport the invalids from the camp, a total of seventy-one carabao carts were used.<sup>22</sup> From the logistical perspective, the support that materialized was amazing. By luck or great planning, the Ranger force enjoyed ample external support. This was a good thing since their logistics assets were austere at best.

The final question that has to be asked is whether the mission's expected outcome justified the risk. Judging by the public response to the rescue at home, the outcome justified the risk; however, the answer to this question is always a judgment call and never a clear cut issue.

The raid on Cabanatuan provides several lessons on the Rangers' roles and missions when examined by the SOF criteria. The "unique" capability of the Rangers was correlated to the mission requirement which could not be filled by other assets or be met by other available SOF assets. The Rangers were not be employed just because they could perform the mission but because there was a probability for a high payoff. Once tasked, the Rangers were resourced to ensure success since failure often means disaster or disastrous repercussions. Ranger operations were imbedded in the overall strategy or campaign plan in order to make a crucial contribution. The risk taken by the commander, based on the expected outcome, involved his wisdom and insight.

Despite their successes in combat, the 6th Ranger Battalion was inactivated on 30 December 1945, fifteen months after their official activation. The Army would not see another Ranger unit until September of 1950.

#### Rangers in Korea

The situation for the United Nations forces in Korea was dismal when the Army Chief of Staff's ,General J. Lawton Collins, visited Korea in August 1950. The North Korean Army had advanced far south near Taegu to close on the Pusan Perimeter. The Far East Command (FECOM) forces under General MacArthur had been badly beaten. The North Koreans repeatedly flanked or attacked rear areas by successfully infiltrating the porous friendly lines. One of the observations that General Collins made would result in activation of the "marauder companies" to counter enemy's actions. Collins stated in his directive to the Army G-3,

One of the major lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact that the North Koreans have made very successful use of small groups, trained, armed and equipped for the

specific purpose of infiltrating our lines and attacking command posts and artillery positions.<sup>23</sup>

He went on to direct establishment of experimental units that were designed "to infiltrate through enemy lines and attack command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communications centers or facilities."<sup>24</sup> This unit would be organized and fielded with one company per infantry division. The unit's mission would be to "infiltrate through enemy lines and attack command posts, artillery, tank parks, and key communications centers or facilities."<sup>25</sup> The intent was to beat the North Koreans in their own game and restore confidence in U.S. forces. The "marauder company" was organized under Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) No. 7-87, Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) (Tentative) dated October 1950, which authorized five officers and one hundred and seven enlisted men.<sup>26</sup> Each man was assigned either a M2 Carbine or a M1 30 caliber rifle. The company's crew-served weapons included 60 millimeter mortars, Browning automatic rifles (BARs), and 57 millimeter recoilless rifles. For transportation, it was authorized two 1/4-ton and one 2 1/2-ton trucks.<sup>27</sup> Before their inactivation on 1 August 1951, the Army fielded seven Ranger companies. The first unit to see action in Korea was the 8213th (Provisional) 8th Army Ranger Company in September 1950. The 8th Army Ranger Company was a FECOM initiative and its organization had no link to an October 1950 TOE. The other six companies were manned and trained in the United States. The following table shows the unit arrival dates and to which divisions they were attached:<sup>28</sup>

TABLE 3  
RANGER COMPANY ARRIVAL DATES

Unit	Arrival Dates	Assignment
8th Army Ranger Company	September 1950	25th Infantry Div
1st Ranger Company	December 1950	2nd Infantry Div
2nd Ranger Company	December 1950	7th Infantry Div
3rd Ranger Company	March 1951	3rd Infantry Div (3 Apr 1951)
4th Ranger Company	December 1950	1st Cavalry Division
5th Ranger Company	March 1951	25th Infantry Div (31 Mar 51)
8th Ranger Company	March 1951	24th Infntry Div (31 Mar 51)

On the whole, the Ranger companies had a short life-span. The 8th Army Ranger Company saw action for just over ten months whereas some companies were only active for less than four months before they were inactivated. Their combat records show that the Ranger companies had tactical successes but did not serve the original purpose for which they were established. This study will now examine the utility of Ranger employment in Korea using the SOF criteria.

Rangers in Korea and the SOF Criteria

Although the newly formed companies were given the "Ranger" designation and many of the participants in the force structure planning process felt that they were seeing a return of Ranger units in the Army, the initial purpose for Rangers must be closely examined to determine whether or not the operational design would justify the classification of a SOF.

To be sure, the Ranger companies were specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct deep infiltration behind enemy lines to attack his critical installations. However, the Ranger companies were employed for purposes other than they were intended. There were various reasons for the misuse which will be discussed below.

In the study conducted by the Eighth U.S. Army on the Korean War, Special Problems in the Korean Conflict, one chapter was devoted to the issues of Ranger employment. The study concluded that the Ranger companies "secured and held key terrain features, acted as infantry support for tanks, protected and screened division, regimental and battalion flanks, provided command post security, performed intelligence and reconnaissance missions."<sup>29</sup> In the staff studies responding to queries by the Army Headquarters, the lackluster tactical successes of the Rangers were highlighted in arguing for dismantling of the Ranger companies. In addition to performing ill-suited missions, the Ranger companies were "hampered by lack of organic transportation and adequate communication, [and] they were a burden to the organization to which they were attached."<sup>30</sup> This observation was made in 1951. Incredibly, today's Ranger units suffer from the same challenges when they are employed in various theaters of operations. The study further argued that "if special units were needed, selected infantrymen could be withdrawn from the line, rehearsed for special missions, and dispatched. In this way, special capabilities would be those in addition to the ability to perform sustained combat."<sup>31</sup> But the real problem with the Ranger companies rested with the inability of field commanders to ensure their proper employment--it meant resisting a temptation to "plug the hole" in the frontlines by using the Rangers for line infantry missions for which they were quite capable but overqualified--as well as an overly optimistic view on the part of force developers of Rangers' capabilities based on its force structure.

Furthermore, the need for a specially organized unit for the Korean conflict is debatable. The tactics the North Koreans used in

1950 was driven by their limited capabilities rather than a calculated approach to strategy. Little use of artillery and air power and no armor were characteristic of North Korean operations by the winter of 1950. Aside from sparse use of mortars, the North Koreans used their superior manpower, their only strength, to their advantage. On the other hand, lacking sufficient strength, American forces were hard pressed to form a "continuous, closely knit forward line."<sup>32</sup> The reasons for enemy successes had less to do with their superior methods but, rather, were due to our weaknesses. Thus, the utility of our adopting enemy's tactics was questionable at best.

Several works written about the Rangers in Korea point out the fact that when the Rangers arrived in the theater, the circumstances had changed. In late November 1950, the American forces had driven back the enemy close to the Yalu River after MacArthur's successful turning movement, the Inchon landing. Contact with the enemy was difficult to maintain since the situation was so fluid. It follows that intelligence was incomplete. All factors made Ranger employment impractical as envisioned by General Collins. After the Chinese foray into the Korean peninsula, the situation was no better suited for Ranger employment. By the time of tactical stalemate, the emphasis on avoiding unnecessary casualties prohibited Ranger missions which are by nature risky. Even if the Army planners assumed that the employment of Rangers could have contributed to unity of effort in Korea, they would have had to consider operational feasibility in order to determine whether or not the actual force structure was suitable for the task.

In a push to get the Rangers to war, a premium was put on time. The initial training was six weeks long at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Although the Rangers were trained on demolitions or fire support control such as close air support and naval gunfire, skills that would have been critical and key to success during deep operations, a short training period only allowed a minimum level of training.<sup>33</sup> Although the initial recruits for the first three Ranger companies came mostly from Army airborne units, recruitment depots were the sources for subsequent companies. Since line infantry soldiers spent about the same amount of time, one could question how extensive the "special" training was for the Rangers.

An emphasis on rapid movement and stealth also dictated the size of the force. With an authorized strength of five officers and 107 enlisted men, a Ranger company was almost half the size of line infantry companies in action in Korea. After having studied infantry operations in Korea, S. L. A. Marshall concluded that an optimum infantry company size was 180 to 200 men.<sup>34</sup> Understrength companies greatly suffered simply because they were not of sufficient strength to conduct rudimentary but critical tasks such as patrolling and designating a reserve. Despite this fact, the field commanders continued to use the Ranger companies as line infantry units.

The issue of command and control was also vague. As directed by General Collins, the Ranger companies were attached to infantry divisions. In practice, the Ranger companies were often further attached to infantry regiments. The problem with this practice was that even an infantry division found it difficult to support the Ranger company with detailed intelligence and assets for insertion and extraction which were key to Ranger missions. Hence, the command and control arrangement even encouraged misuse of the Rangers as line

infantry. Had the companies been attached to a corps or higher headquarters that possessed the assets to provide the necessary support, the Rangers may have had a more decisive role in Korea. Optimum command and control also could have alleviated the criticisms of Rangers for being "uneconomical" and a source of manpower drain from conventional units.<sup>35</sup>

When the Army was trying to figure out the force structure for Ranger units, the evidence suggests that no effort was made to "correlate the operational design" of the Ranger companies with the experiences of Ranger units in World War II.<sup>36</sup> Thus many of the lessons from the unit from which they took their lineage were never considered, a sure way to suffer from the same problems. During World War II, poor intelligence was the key factor in the demise of the 1st and 3rd Ranger Battalions at Anzio. The Ranger companies suffered from the same shortcoming in Korea. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the Rangers were parceled out in companies with skeletal administrative and logistical support. There was no way a Ranger company could provide liaison to attached headquarters to identify requirements. Infantry divisions fared no better. Normally, the source of division intelligence was line units' patrolling to their immediate front. Since the units constantly experienced difficulty in maintaining contact with the enemy, intelligence was hard to come by. Given limited intelligence capabilities at a division level, the field commanders appeared to have little choice but to employ the Rangers in a manner that minimized risk. The units to which the Rangers were attached simply were not able to provide the necessary intelligence support for Ranger missions.

Fire support was another weakness for the Rangers in Korea. Although the Rangers were trained to control close air support and naval gunfire, they were rarely given the fire support assets or communications equipment to conduct such operations. The Rangers were expected to receive close air support from the division to which they were attached; it rarely happened. As a result, the divisions never fully took advantage of a unique Ranger capability--deep penetration behind enemy lines to strike decisive targets.

Organization of the Ranger companies constrained their logistical capability and ground mobility. Although the Rangers were capable of airborne operations, they had only conducted one airborne mission. The requirement for the Rangers to conduct a periodic parachute jump for pay purposes also strained the division's limited air assets. Since no vehicles were authorized except for one cargo truck and two jeeps, the Rangers walked everywhere whenever they could not obtain transportation. Hence, the higher headquarters staff rarely saw the Ranger companies as an asset with unique capabilities. Instead, in most divisions, the Rangers were seen as an administrative and logistical burden.

The lackluster performance and problems associated with Ranger employment in Korea did not spell the end of Ranger units in the U.S. Army. The war in Vietnam saw Rangers in action, if only in a name. However, the Rangers, resembling the World War II battalions, were revived in the early 1970s to make a unique contribution to American military operations.

### Operation Just Cause

Just after midnight on 20 December 1989, the United States military forces launched an invasion of Panama to protect U.S. lives and key sites and facilities, capture and deliver Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian dictator, to competent authority, neutralize Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF), neutralize PDF command and control, support establishment of a U.S.-recognized government in Panama, and restructure the PDF.<sup>37</sup> The American coup de main involved U.S. forces attacking twenty-seven different objectives to neutralize the PDF and "decapitate" the Noriega government in a highly complex operation where synchronization, surprise, and overwhelming force at decisive points were crucial (fig. 8).<sup>38</sup> But the U.S. involvement in affairs of Panama was not new. Between 1850 and 1950, the U.S. intervened in Panama thirteen times. Charged with protection of the Panama Canal, U.S. military forces in Panama peaked at 68,000 in 1943 and the size of forces fluctuated in response to often turbulent political and social situations in Panama. Since 1975, the U.S. military maintained an average of 10,000 personnel.<sup>39</sup>

When he came to power in 1983, Noriega had already been assisting the CIA in its Iran-Contra operations. But his usefulness to the Reagan administration diminished after the Iran-contra scandal broke and the contra operation ceased. Noriega's abuses such as drug trafficking, internal corruption, harrassment of U.S. service members, and suppressing civil liberties increasingly became a liability to the Reagan administration.<sup>40</sup> Noriega's indictment on drug charges in 1988 initiated a series of events that came to culminate on 20 December 1989.

In February 1988, coinciding with Noriega's indictment, U.S. forces began planning for contingency operations involving military intervention. On 16 March 1988, selected PDF officers attempted a coup and failed. Another failed coup attempt occurred in October 1989. In June 1988, the Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command (CINCSO), designated XVIII Airborne Corps as the base for the Joint Task Force South (JTFSO) which marked the beginning of intensified the planning effort to revise OPLAN Blue Spoon which called for the deployment of U.S. forces to Panama. In May 1989, Noriega allowed free elections and then invalidated the results once it became clear to him that his front-man lost the election. When internal political violence threatened the security of the Canal zone following the elections, the U.S. reinforced the forward deployed U.S. forces with a brigade headquarters and an infantry battalion from the 7th Infantry Division (light), a mechanized infantry battalion from the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), and a Marine Corps Light Armored Infantry (LAI) Company. In September 1989, JTFSO revised OPLAN Blue Spoon, which outlined a limited operation for removal of Noriega from power, and the plan became OPLAN 90-2. A couple of key events in December 1989 prompted the National Command Authority (NCA) to direct the execution of OPLAN 90-2: on 15 December, Noriega declared that a state of war existed with the U.S. and Panama; during the ensuing two days, a Marine lieutenant was killed by PDF and a Navy lieutenant and his wife were detained and harrassed.<sup>41</sup>

The largest contingency operation since World War II called for 24,000 personnel of which 3,300 were to be airdropped. Among the twenty- seven PDF objectives, four airfields were identified as key

targets: PDF rotary wing airfield at Albrook was tasked to Task Force Bayonet, 193d Infantry Brigade responsibility; Paitilla Airfield in Panama City was SEAL Team 4's responsibility; the 75th Ranger Regiment, Task Force Red, was tasked to seize Rio Hato Airfield and Torrijos/Tocumen International Airport.<sup>42</sup>

The 75th Ranger Regiment, Task Force-Red, was given the spearhead role in seizing two of the four critical airfields. Elements of the 2d and 3d Ranger Battalions were to conduct an airborne assault onto the Rio Hato Airfield to seize and deny the use of the airfield against elements of the 6th and 7th Companies of the PDF. The 1st Ranger Battalion reinforced with C Company, 3d Ranger Battalion, Task Force Red Tango) was the main effort. Its mission was to conduct an airborne assault D-day H+0003 (200103R December 1989) to seize Omar Torrijos/Tocumen Airport and eliminate PDF in sector; to clear Tocumen Airport for airland operations; to be prepared to conduct battle-turnover to JTFSOUTH (Joint Task Force South, General Stiner's command); to be prepared to conduct follow-on combat operations as directed; and, on order, to redeploy to CONUS.<sup>43</sup>

The Rangers were to be followed by the 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division 45 minutes later and further followed by the 2d and 1st Brigades, 7th Infantry Division (Light) to conduct subsequent operations.<sup>44</sup>

At 0100 hours on 20 December, an AC-130 gunship opened fire on the compound of the 2d Infantry Company of PDF as AH-6 attack helicopters engaged the Panamanian Air Force (FAP) control building and a PDF bunker at the airport entrance. Three minutes later, four companies of Rangers parachuted from 500 feet onto two separate, parallel runways. Assembling on the move, the Rangers quickly eliminated PDF resistance and secured their assault objectives. (fig. 9)

The C Company, 3d Ranger Battalion faced an unexpected situation. Unknown to the Rangers, an international flight from Brazil had landed at the airport minutes prior to the parachute assault and had unloaded its passengers. The airport terminal was expected to be empty save for a few maintenance workers. During the clearing of the terminal buildings, the Rangers discovered that the PDF had taken several of the recently arrived passengers hostage. After two and one-half hours of negotiations, the hostages were set free and PDF soldiers surrendered. By 0630 hours, the Torrijos/Tocumen airfield was secure and a forward aerial resupply point (FARP) was established to receive incoming aircraft. The follow-on forces from the 82d Airborne Division conducted airborne operations as early as an hour after the Rangers began their assault and continued to arrive throughout the morning of 20 December.<sup>45</sup> Once the 82d Airborne Division assumed control of the airport, the Rangers were attached to the division (fig. 10). Subsequently, the Rangers conducted patrolling throughout the town of Tocumen and on 28 December, the 1st Battalion was given the mission of reconnaissance-in-force operations in the vicinity of Cerro Azul to pursue remnants of the PDF and Dignity Battalion (DIGBAT) forces, seize weapons caches, and neutralize potential rally points and exfiltration routes to the Panamanian interior.<sup>46</sup> The entire operation was a success, and the Rangers suffered one man killed in action and five wounded.

At 0100 hours, 20 December, the 2d Ranger Battalion and 3d Ranger Battalion (-) conducted an airborne assault onto Rio Hato to seize the airfield and neutralize the 6th and 7th PDF Infantry Companies. The Rangers at Rio Hato met heavier resistance since PDF forces there had been alerted. Once on the ground, the Ranger assembled

on the move to assault the barracks and established an airhead. By morning, the Rangers captured 250 prisoners and secured and cleared the airfield for future operations.<sup>47</sup>

Operation Just Cause and the SOF Criteria

An examination of the roles and missions of the Rangers in Panama based on the SOF criteria should be made. OPLAN 90-2 assigned the spearhead role to the 75th Ranger Regiment to allow the follow-on forces of the JTF to mass its combat power seizing the Torrijos/Tocumen Airport. The airport was critical to the operation for several reasons.

Aside from Howard Air Force Base (AFB), the airport was the only airfield with capabilities to accomodate a large number of various aircraft. Howard AFB was not capable of handling such high influx of airflow. Howard AFB was so close to Panama City that it could have come under attack by elements of PDF. The Torrijos/Tocumen was the only international airport in the country and was critical to Panama's economy. Disciplined application of force was required to minimize collateral damage. The Panamanian Air Force headquarters and the 2d Infantry Company, the Pumas, were also garrisoned in the Tocumen Airfield area. A real possibility existed that Noriega's first point of escape might be the Torrijos Airport, and the 2d Infantry Company had been a consistently loyal unit. Operationally, the Torrijos Airport location was significant. The airport was between Panama City and Fort Cimmaron where the PDF Battalion 2000 was garrisoned. The Battalion 2000 had played a key role in quelling the October coup. Control of the Torrijos Airport enabled U.S. forces to deny enemy reinforcement to Panama City.<sup>48</sup>

The Rangers' role and missions during Operations Just Cause had been developed and refined during the 1980s. Colonel William F. Kernan, then Commander of the 75th Ranger Regiment, summarized the significance of Ranger operations in Operation Just Cause:

Panama validated our training programs and our contingency plan, as well as confirm our focus. The massing of fires (direct and supporting fires), coupled with the synchronization of maneuver, allowed us to generate overwhelming combat power and exploit the tactical surprise we were able to achieve. . . . Controlled aggression, coupled with violence of action, ensured our success and minimized our casualties. The small unit leaders made it happen. They knew what needed to be done and did it.<sup>49</sup>

His summary confirms that the Rangers possess a unique capability to execute a highly complex operation with precision and violence of action. It is highly unlikely that an airborne infantry battalion with limited special training could have fulfilled the role.

As stated before, JTFSO's goals were aimed at applying maximum combat power to overwhelm the enemy before he had a chance to react. Essential to the plan was the capability to execute a forced entry to allow the follow-on forces to quickly build combat power. The concept of Rangers' operations was nested in the JTF commander's intent and was well-coordinated toward a "commonly recognized objective."<sup>50</sup> Examination of operational feasibility is next.

The forced entry mission in Panama was a result of "over forty years of study, training, and force development."<sup>51</sup> Not until 1980 did the Rangers first execute a forced entry type mission. Although the concept is not new, the Rangers were not recognized as a suitable force until the early 1970s. Once designated, it took two contingency operations for the Rangers to refine their techniques, Operations Eagle Claw and Urgent Fury. The forced entry operation still remains a highly

complex and risky mission because success requires close coordination with follow-on conventional forces as well as detailed planning and decentralized execution. Continuous and integrative training are a must in order to maintain a credible capability. But many are asking at what price?

Operation Just Cause validated the force size required to conduct not only the forced entry mission but also other SOF missions directed by the NCA. The three battalions achieved decisive mass at crucial points to accomplish the mission. A smaller force, e.g., two battalions, would not have met the mission requirements. It should be noted that all three Ranger Battalions were needed and committed in Panama, leaving no force available for other contingencies.

The situation in Panama was unique for the U.S. forces. JTFSO was able to forward deploy selected units. The level of forces in Panama, however, was not sufficient by any measure. As previously mentioned, a rapid force build-up required an air lodgement capable of accomodating a large number of aircraft and troops. The Rangers' capability to deploy anywhere in the world on a short notice to conduct a highly complex forced entry mission alleviated the problems of distance and available ISB.

Once on the ground, speed, essential in the seizure and rapid introduction of combat power, was obtained by airdropping the Ranger gunjeeps. The gunjeeps provided additional firepower and antitank capability as well as ground mobility to rapidly establish blocking positions to seal off the objective.<sup>52</sup>

Although some reports indicate that the PDF and Noriega had prior knowledge of the invasion, tactical surprise was achieved at

decisive locations. The PDF at the Torrijos/Tocumen Airfield was on a general state of alert but most did not believe their own intelligence reports. The runways had not been blocked and the PDF 2d Infantry Company's weapons were still in their arms room.<sup>53</sup> Noriega also did not believe his intelligence reports. Noriega had planned to spend the night at Ceremi, a PDF military recreation center near the entrance to the Tocumen side of the airport complex. After the assault commenced, "Noriega had come within three hundred meters of the advancing Rangers" before he fled into Tocumen<sup>54</sup>

The command and control arrangement was also key to the Ranger success. Along with other SOF units, the Rangers were controlled by Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). Commander of the JSOTF was Major General Wayne A. Downing who had been the first 75th Ranger Regimental Commander since Colonel Darby during World War II. General Downing understood the capabilities and limitations of Rangers. His staff was also familiar with Ranger units and routinely planned and controlled Ranger operations. Little time was wasted when the JSOTF was given the Ranger unit for planning and employment. JTFSO Commander, Lieutenant General Carl Stiner, was also familiar with Ranger operations, having commanded Ranger forces in previous exercises. Thus, commanders' personal understanding of Rangers' capabilities and proper employment and staff integration clearly facilitated optimum employment of the Rangers.

The AC-130 gunships provided critical fire support in Panama that had particular importance to the operation, minimal collateral damage. AC-130's initial engagements at the Torrijos/Tocumen Airfield destroyed the PDF 2d Infantry Company barracks with precision.

Precision fire control and accurate weapons systems enabled the aircraft to distinguish the targets at a great distance. The use of AC-130 as fire support for the Rangers was consistent with Rangers' training and mission. In fact, coordinated fires in support of Rangers provided key training opportunities for the AC-130 that facilitated fire support by an AC-130 to major conventional units during Operation Just Cause.

For Ranger operations, detailed and timely intelligence is of paramount importance. Ranger history has ample evidence of intelligence failure leading to costly results. The Ranger Regiment received timely and detailed intelligence from the planning phase through execution directly from JSOTF. Streamlining of the intelligence flow accounted for a responsive intelligence apparatus as well as providing access to the national intelligence assets. During the planning phase, the Rangers made use of extremely detailed terrain models and satellite imagery to accomplish intricate planning as well as for effective unit rehearsals. By using the hatch-mount antennas with tactical satellite communications systems, real-time intelligence was passed to the Rangers enroute to Torrijos/Tocumen. Technological advances and the established SOF command and control structure proved key to intelligence and mission success.

The austere nature of Ranger logistical systems prompted a few organizational innovations. During the pre-deployment phase, the RSE played a key role in the staging of Ranger forces at Fort Benning and Hunter Army Airfield. Installation agencies and habitual service support units provided timely and responsive support. The Ranger Regiment deployment went flawlessly despite adverse weather. Once on

the ground, however, the Rangers' austere logistical structure plagued them.

Having carried in three days of supply in their rucksacks, the need for logistics coordination had to start almost immediately after the forced entry mission. The priority given to the Rangers at home stations, by virtue of being the spearheading force as the main effort, was no longer true in Panama. The 2d and 3d Ranger Battalions were given subsequent missions out of Howard AFB which housed JSOTF headquarters. The two battalions were not hampered by logistics because they were still controlled and supported by the JSOTF.

The 1st Ranger Battalion, however, was not as fortunate. Attached to the 82d Airborne Division at the Torrijos/Tocumen Airfield, the 1st Ranger Battalion was put on the list along with other attached units to which the 82d Airborne Division reluctantly had to provide support. Once a priority unit, the Rangers had to compete for logistical support but with a disadvantage of being an attached unit without priority. The Rangers' efforts brought mixed results until the JSOTF managed to transport prepackaged resupply pallets to the Torrijos/Tocumen Airfield.

The Rangers' high-risk mission represented a willingness of the JTFSO Commander to employ the Rangers to achieve crucial desired endstate. The operation depended on rapid force build-up which required an adequate lodgement for the follow-on forces. In Operation Just Cause, the use of the Ranger force was justified by the final outcome.

### Conclusions

The Rangers are a SOF asset that can be defined as "what conventional forces are not."<sup>55</sup> The confusion arose from the fact that the Ranger force structure and its training were so much like infantry units. But "special operations are those military operations that conventional forces cannot accomplish or undertake without unacceptable risks and commitments of resources."<sup>56</sup> This chapter examined historical examples of Ranger operations using the SOF criteria. The unique capability, unity of effort, operational feasibility, supportability, and risk-outcome assessment provide a framework by which appropriate employment can be determined as well as the operational requirement.

The Ranger Battalions in World War II experienced difficulty in articulating their capabilities and proper roles and missions. However, the raid on the Cabanatuan POW camp by the 6th Ranger Battalion exemplified the proper role and mission. The keys to success were numerous: employing commander's understanding of its capabilities and limitations; identification of unique requirement; intelligence support that meets the requirements in terms of detail, depth, and timeliness; appropriate command and control arrangement.

The Ranger companies in Korea were misused because of field commanders' inability to understand their capabilities and limitations as well as supported divisions' inability to provide adequate intelligence, logistical, and fire support. The circumstances for which they were activated had changed by the time the Rangers arrived in the theater of operations. Field commanders considered them a highly trained infantry unit and employed them as such. The force structure and command and control arrangement hampered their ability to fully

demonstrate their capabilities. Instead, the Rangers were viewed as an administrative and logistical burden.

The Ranger operation during Operation Just Cause in Panama represented the proper role and employment based on the SOF criteria. A unique forced entry capability which the Rangers had developed since the 1970s played a crucial role in overall success in Panama. SOF headquarters established during the 1980s ensured proper employment of the Ranger force as well as ensuring flawless integration of SOF and conventional forces. The Ranger force structure and training doctrine were validated. Adequate intelligence, logistical, and fire support combined to set the conditions for success.

As the U.S. Armed Forces undergo force reduction in the 1990s, the Ranger units have also been subject of scrutiny. The current three battalion structure for the Rangers also has been considered for reduction. But the U.S. Army is increasingly becoming a force projection army with increasing likelihood of contingency operations. In a non-permissive or hostile environment where a forced entry operation is needed, the Rangers' role is crucial and well defined. In addition to a forced entry capability, the Rangers also fulfill the SOF mission requirements.

This study will next examine the future strategic environment and potential threats to U.S. interests around the world. Further, it will determine the operational requirement for Rangers and attempt to correlate the requirements to their capabilities in terms of roles and missions.

Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Judges 7:5-7 Good News Bible (TEV).

<sup>2</sup>Headquarters, 75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Regiment Command Brief, 1995.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>William B. Breuer, The Great Raid on Cabanatuan: Rescuing the Doomed Ghosts of Bataan and Corregidor (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1994), iii.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 113; and Jerome J. Haggerty, A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II (New York: Fordham University, 1982), 251.

<sup>8</sup>Forrest B. Johnson, Hour of Redemption: The Ranger Raid on Cabanatuan (New York: Manor Books, Inc., 1978), 18-28.

<sup>9</sup>Haggerty, 249-251.

<sup>10</sup>Johnson, 146-150.

<sup>11</sup>Haggerty, 276-285.

<sup>12</sup>Johnson, 18-28.

<sup>13</sup>Ray M. Stroupe, "Rescue by the Rangers," Military Review (Sep-Oct 1945): 63-66.

<sup>14</sup>Johnson, 180.

<sup>15</sup>Stroupe, 184.

<sup>16</sup>Johnson, 180.

<sup>17</sup>Breuer, 131.

<sup>18</sup>Stroupe, 63-64.

<sup>19</sup>Breuer, 114.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>21</sup>Johnson, 266.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 338.

<sup>23</sup>J. Lawton Collins, "Organization of marauder companies." to Army G3, 29 August 1950 by Gen Collins.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>"Ranger Companies." Chief of Army Field Forces to Army G3 forwarding "Study - One Ranger Infantry Co (Abn) per Infantry Regiment, 6 Feb 51, 1.

<sup>27</sup>John G. Provost, Nomads of the Battlefield: Ranger Companies in the Korean War, 1950-1951 (Master of Military Art and Science Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 17.

<sup>28</sup>"Special Problems in the Korean Conflict." HQ, Eighth US Army, June 1952, CARL, 81.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 84.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>32</sup>S. L. A., Marshall, Infantry Operations and Weapons Usage in Korea. London: Greenhill Books, 1988, xiii.

<sup>33</sup>Provost, 8.

<sup>34</sup>Marshall, 55.

<sup>35</sup>Provost, 61.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>37</sup>Department of the Army, "Operation Just Cause Lessons Learned: Volume I. Soldiers and Leadership" (FT Leavenworth: Center for Army Lessons Learned, October 1990), I-5.

<sup>38</sup>Gordon C. Bonham, Airfield Seizure: The Modern "Key to the Country (School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1991), 28.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Donnelly, et al., Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 1-4.

<sup>40</sup>Donnelly, 8-10.

<sup>41</sup>CALL Operation Just Cause, I-1 to I-4; Bonham, 27-28.

<sup>42</sup>Bonham, 29.

<sup>43</sup>Edward M. Flanagan, Jr., Battle For Panama: Inside Operation Just Cause (New York: Brassey's Inc., 1993), 157, quoting 75th Ranger Regiment Command Briefing slides.

<sup>44</sup>CALL Operation Just Cause, I-5.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., I-10 to I-11; and Bonham, 30-31.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., I-11.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Bonham, 29-30.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 37, quoting Colonel Kernan, 75th Ranger Regimental Commander for Operation Just Cause.

<sup>50</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. Field Manual 100-5, Operations. (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 2-5.

<sup>51</sup>Bonham, 37.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>54</sup>Flanagan, 159.

<sup>55</sup>Christopher J. Lamb, "Perspectives on Emerging SOF Roles and Missions: The view from the Office of the Secretary of Defense," in Roles and Missions of SOF: In The Aftermath of The Cold War Shultz, Richard H., et. al. ed, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1995), 200.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

CHAPTER V  
FUTURE ROLES AND MISSIONS OF RANGERS

Conflict is the norm for international affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Richard N. Haass, Conflicts Unending

Army Doctrine in Transition

Various forces have shaped the world as is today and the years to come will be marked by increasing, unpredictable changes. The biggest challenge the Army faces today is the fact that the future is not as predictable as in the past where the United States knew who the enemy was and how he fought. In whatever shape the Army will be in the twenty-first century, though, it is reasonably certain that it will have flatter command hierarchies and will consist of small, more flexible units.<sup>2</sup>

In 1993, then Chief of Staff of the Army General Gordon R. Sullivan pronounced that "as the size of a unit decreases, there can be a corresponding increase in the effects it is able to produce if it is equipped with the right technology used by high-quality, well-trained, and well-led troops employing proper doctrine."<sup>3</sup> And in 1994, General Sullivan identified four possible major roles of the Army in the near future:

Help promote an environment conducive to political and economic stability. Participate in efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Contribute to domestic recovery, participate in global stability operations, and retain its capability to produce decisive victory. Prevent crises from occurring or from developing into conflicts; resolve

conflicts before they spread; or end wars decisively on terms favorable to the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The Army is expected to fulfill these complex roles and it requires a more flexible force probably more than anyone now realizes.

On 1 August 1994 the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) published TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, Force XXI Operations. Normally, such a document serves as the basis for a future FM 100-5. TRADOC Pam 525-5 provides a broad conceptual framework of the future concerning force structure, strategic environment, and the conduct of war. The TRADOC document acknowledges that the Army will face a fundamentally different environment in the future.

In the absence of a monolithic threat on which our current doctrine is based, the Army made a departure from a prescriptive doctrine with its focus on Central Europe. The Army adopted a doctrine of "full-dimensional operations, stressing principles to be learned and understood, then relying on the art of battle command to apply to those scenarios as they occur."<sup>5</sup> In short, the Army has at least tacitly conceded to Sir Michael Howard's assertion that "whatever doctrine the Armed Forces are working on now, they have got it wrong. . . [and] it does not matter that they have got it wrong. What does matter is their capacity to get it right quickly when the moment arrives."<sup>6</sup> The Army seeks to develop a capacity to quickly adapt to a challenge at hand.

The difficulty in predicting its future strategic environment does not mean that there is a lack of forecasts on future trends. Whether or not the threat is singular, a force whose stated goals are annihilation of its enemies, the United States faces a whole range of

challenges to her national interests. And the challenges are spawned by the current strategic environment fraught with turmoil and conflict.

#### Environment

As mentioned above, there are many views on the nature of global and regional forces and trends. In his article "Describing the International Security Environment: The Clash of Ideas," Robert D. Walz provides a synopsis of three major and differing views advanced by Alvin and Heidi Toffler, Samuel Huntington, and Robert Kaplan.<sup>7</sup>

In their book War and Anti-War, the Tofflers espouse a pattern of war resulting from a clash of civilizations. The Tofflers see the great changes in society as "waves" of change. Since massive changes in society cannot take place without conflict, they contend that the theory of waves of civilization clashing will necessarily produce "powerful crosscurrents." These waves are represented by three distinct, separate civilizations that possess a potential for clashing. First Wave civilization is agrarian, a society which is tied to land. Regardless of the civilization's religion, language, and culture, it came about through the agricultural revolution. The First Wave is symbolized by the hoe. Second Wave civilization is industrial, a society characterized by many systems designed for mass production, mass consumption, mass education, and mass media. The assembly line symbolizes the Second Wave. Third Wave civilization is based on high technology providing information and innovation, management, culture and pop culture, and other services to the world. The Third Wave is symbolized by the computer.<sup>8</sup> The authors assert that the three "contrasting and competing civilizations" have their own economic,

political, and military requirements. They represent a trisected world where profound changes in social, economic, and political changes will precipitate competitions for dominance. In such an environment,

the historic change from a bisected to a trisected world could well trigger the deepest power struggles on the planet as each country tries to position itself in the emerging three-tiered power structure. Trisection sets the context in which most wars from now on will be fought.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the Tofflers believe that the world will continue to develop in constant fluctuation, instead of a perceived tendency to reach equilibrium, where each part of the world will be extremely vulnerable to external influences.

In his article, "The Clash of Civilizations?" Samuel P. Huntington provides a less radical view of the new world and the source of conflict. He asserts that

the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will be the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics.<sup>10</sup>

Huntington's definition of civilization is the grouping and identity of people that share common objective elements. And the conflicts of the future will be along the "fault lines"--defined as boundaries that separate different civilizations--spurred on by six phenomena in society. The real and basic differences among civilizations exist. The world is becoming a smaller place resulting in increased interactions. Economic modernization and social change divorce people from long-standing local identities which also help to weaken the nation-state as a source of identity. The dominant West enhances the desire of non-Western civilizations to shape the world in their ways. Economic

regionalism is on the rise. Finally, "cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones."<sup>11</sup>

As the world evolves around different, distinct identities in ethnic and religious terms which tend to enhance the contrast civilizations see in each other, the clash will take place at two levels, micro- and macro-levels. Conflicts among adjacent cultures over the control of territory are examples of a micro-level clash. At the macro-level, states compete for relative military and economic power, the control of international institutions, and other interests.<sup>12</sup> Huntington concludes, "the central axis of world politics in the future is likely to be . . . the conflict between 'the West and the Rest' and the responses of non-Western civilizations to Western power and values."<sup>13</sup>

In direct contrast to Tofflers' and Huntington's views of a possible coexistence of competing, distinct civilizations rife with conflicts stemming from great changes in society, Robert D. Kaplan sees the world on the downward spiral path to anarchy. In his article in Atlantic Monthly "The Coming Anarchy", Kaplan dissects social, economic, and political trends in West Africa to predict what path one can expect our civilization to take.

Disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism.<sup>14</sup>

Kaplan asserts that to understand the events of the next fifty years, the effects of environmental scarcity, cultural and racial clash, geographic destiny, and the transformation of war on our society must be understood. The challenges rising from environmental scarcity will be

the national-security issue of the early twenty-first century. Scarcer resources will further intensify the cultural and racial tensions in the regions that are least capable of dealing with resultant problems. The current map of the world, depicting almost two hundred countries by a bold and uniform colors, is an invention of European colonialism. It does not truly reflect the real mosaic of cultural, political, and ethnic tiles. Thus it is indicative of our conceptual barrier "that prevents us from comprehending the political crack-up just beginning to occur worldwide."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, Kaplan examines the coming nature of war and finds a troubling pattern. For those who have known nothing of the comfort and stability of a middle-class life, war is an attractive option and is "not a means but an end."<sup>16</sup> Hence, warfare dictated by a conceptual framework based on Clausewitz's ideas of war is giving way to one that is governed by more primitive or fundamental influences.<sup>17</sup>

Examination of the disparate views of Huntington, the Tofflers, and Kaplan reveal two diverging trends. One thought espouses the convergence of society where coexistence is possible in healthy competition. The other suggests the diverging and chaotic state of society where civilizations are increasingly "ungovernable." Nevertheless, a constant in all three views is the fact that conflict will likely be increasing, complicated by the reasons cited by the above authors.

Next this study will consider the threats to our U.S. interests and draw conclusions concerning a Rangers' role in countering them.

### Threat Spectrum Model

As the Cold War paradigm gives way to a new threat order, one must examine the future threats in relation to their capabilities or characteristics. TRADOC Pam 525-5 contains the threat spectrum model (TSM) (fig. 11). The model arrays potential threats across the spectrum in terms of scope, doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, and soldiers.<sup>17</sup> However, it does not consider direct or indirect impact of threat forces on operations in response to "phenomena." Nor does it accurately reflect the nuclear threshold along the spectrum. This study proposes that the model takes into account threat forces within phenomenological threats. The threat spectrum model identifies the following threats: phenomenological threats; nonnation forces, internal security forces; infantry-based armies, armor-mechanized-based armies, complex, adaptive armies.<sup>18</sup> This is a good start yet the model is incomplete.

As the events around the world had already shown, the danger of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of the states aspiring to achieve regional hegemony is more likely than once thought. The threat of nuclear holocaust triggered by a nuclear exchange between two superpower is also seen as less likely. The states that acquire a nuclear capability are also most likely to have a limited objective. Hence, the use of nuclear or other WMDs to achieve limited objectives might be considered viable, which reflects the will to employ such weapons. Thus a more complete threat spectrum model would show the nuclear threshhold lower than depicted.

A complete threat model should also include threat forces that may be present in natural or man-made disasters. One reason for

American involvement in the regional crises, caused by the disasters or calamity, might be the inability of governments in power to provide immediate relief. Further, such governments may possess insufficient control within their borders over non traditional threats competing for their interests. The situation could then be ripe for existence of forces that would be hostile to all groups. The situation in Somalia in 1993 is a good example of non-traditional threats.

#### Future Roles and Missions

As the likelihood of regional conflicts increases, the need for a force that can quickly respond worldwide also increases. In conflict prevention, crisis response, noncombatant evacuation, and peace enforcement are the likely operations that would require Ranger capabilities.

The Ranger force possesses the unique capabilities to perform its doctrinal missions across the operational continuum. Increasing demand on Army forces to operate at more than one level of war or readily transition from one level to another puts a premium on flexibility and adaptability. The Ranger force possesses such qualities as well as potent combat power it can bring to bear on the enemy to achieve decisive victory.

#### Conclusions

The Army's doctrine continues to experience the same dynamic and, unpredictable force that are shaping the strategic environment. The move away from prescriptive doctrine with its focus on Eastern Europe was precipitated by an uncertain future. Several views on future trends have been examined. The theory of converging civilizations was

juxtaposed with that of diverging civilizations. A trend toward increasing conflict seems to be inevitable. The threat spectrum model, reflecting the post-Cold War environment, is a useful tool to determine the operational requirement for Rangers.

The final chapter consists of conclusions based on the historical analyses using the SOF criteria and the examination of current Ranger capabilities.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Richard N. Haass, Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 1.

<sup>2</sup>David M. King, Force XXI and the American Way of War (School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1995), 1.

<sup>3</sup>King, 13, quoting General Gordon Sullivan.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 14-15, quoting General Sullivan.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of the Army. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, Force XXI Operations: A Concept for the Evolution of Full-dimensional Operations for the Strategic Army of the Early Twenty-First Century. (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1994), 1-3.

<sup>6</sup>Michael Howard, "Military Science in an Age of Peace," Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies (RUSI: March 1974), 3-9, in The Evolution of Modern Warfare (Ft. Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College, 1995), 45.

<sup>7</sup>Robert D. Walz, "Describing the International Security Environment: The Clash of Ideas," Strategic, Operational, and Joint Environments (Ft. Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College, 1995), 75.

<sup>8</sup>Alvin Toffler, War and Anti-War: Survival at The Dawn of The 21st Century (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 18-22.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 23-25.

<sup>10</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," Foreign Affairs (Summer 1993): 22.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 25-27.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>14</sup>Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming of Anarchy," Atlantic Monthly (February 1994): 46.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 54-69.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 72, quoting Martin van Creveld.

<sup>17</sup>TRADOC PAM 525-5, 2-3.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

In a world of men conflict can only be managed, not eliminated.<sup>1</sup>

Richard Haass, Conflicts Unending

This study has examined the Ranger unit's operational concept in terms of its current capabilities, its historical roles and missions in terms of operations, command and control arrangement, and force structure. The unique capabilities of the Rangers were also examined.

The history of Rangers illustrate several themes. The Army created Ranger units in response to an operational requirement far back as the days of Robert Rogers during the French-Indian War. Commanders who considered the Rangers' capabilities and limitations saw desired mission success. When the Rangers were used as line infantry, they took a heavy toll in spite of being successful. The Ranger units were also considered by conventional units as too costly as they attracted aggressive and dynamic leaders. In his perspective, General Cavazos stated that when the Army loses a Ranger company in battle, a company of leaders are lost.<sup>2</sup>

The Army seems to continue to treat the Ranger unit as a dual purpose force. Today's Army doctrine reflects the tendency by stating that Rangers are both infantry and SOF. The need for integrated operations involving conventional forces and SOF is still valid; however, the Ranger units are best employed to conduct SOF missions as

opposed to light infantry tasks. Although initially conceived and developed as elite infantry, the Rangers have evolved and, in reality, should be considered as a SOF.

The evolution of the Ranger concept since 1974 seems to indicate that the Army recognizes the need for proper employment of Rangers. The creation of USASOC and USSOCOM as well as other innovative force tailoring, such as the adaptive joint force package concept reflect the lessons learned from the past mistakes.<sup>3</sup>

The current capabilities of the Ranger Battalions were compared to an SF unit. This study concluded that a Ranger Battalion possesses unique capabilities which complement and enhance SF capabilities by providing what SF units lack.

This study next examined three historical Ranger operations and concluded that Ranger operations were successful when the Ranger units were used as a SOF force. The Ranger operations were examined using the five SOF criteria. A series of the Ranger Charters promulgated by serving Chief of Staff of the Army represented an evolution of the Ranger concept in terms of Rangers' roles and missions. The historical study of three Ranger operations highlighted the key events and decisions that shaped the Ranger units of today.

The experience of the 6th Ranger Battalion in the Pacific theater represent a sound application of SOF. The raid on the Cabanatuan POW camp exemplified the proper role and mission. The success of the 6th Ranger Battalion seems to support the validity of the SOF criteria.

The relatively short-lived Ranger experience in Korea also illustrate the importance of a proper employment concept as well as the feasibility and supportability requirements. The lack of adequate

intelligence, logistical, and fire support for Ranger companies in Korea highlight the importance of clear understanding of Rangers' capabilities and limitations.

The forced-entry operation in support of the Panama invasion in 1989 represented the proper role and employment for the Ranger Regiment. The Ranger contribution to the operation was unique and crucial to mission success. The role of JSOTF in commanding and controlling the Ranger force was an outcome of the evolutionary process spanning 15 years.

As the Army seeks to transition to meet the future threats, the forecasting process is complicated by the social, economic, and political trends that defy traditional model. Instability and an increased likelihood of regional conflicts and non-tradtional threats are forcing the Army to think "outside the box." Despite the predicament the Army finds itself in, the one fact is clear. In the near term, at least, the frequency of conflicts will increase.

The theorists discussed in the previous chapter also seem to suggest that the great changes in society also inevitably bring changes to the nature of war. As the Army prepares to enter the twenty-first century, it will be wise to heed the warnings of the changing nature of war: "War, far from being merely a means, has very often been considered an end."<sup>4</sup> Thus the need for a highly trained and motivated force such as the Ranger units will continue to exist.

Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Richard N. Haass, Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 150.

<sup>2</sup>General Cavazos, Interview by the author, 27 March 1996, FT Leavenworth, KS.

<sup>3</sup>Glenn W. Goodman, Jr., "Rangers Get Sealegs," Armed Forces Journal International (May 1994): 52.

<sup>4</sup>Martin van Creveld, The Transformation of War (New York: Maxwell Macmillan, Inc, 1991), 218.

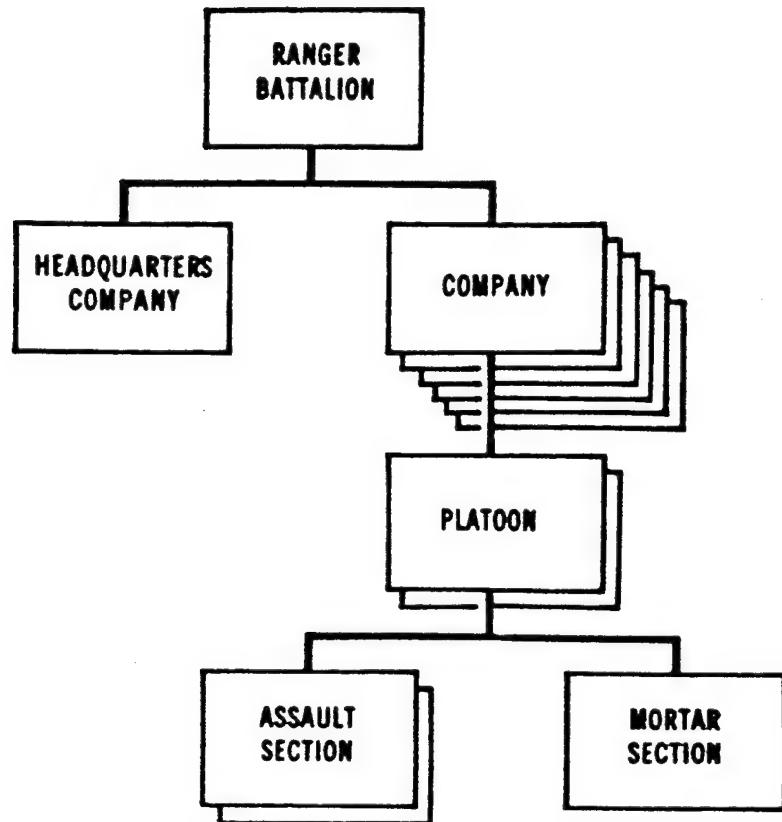


Figure 1: Organization of the 1st Ranger Battalion at Carrickfergus, June 1942. Source: Michael J. King, Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 9.

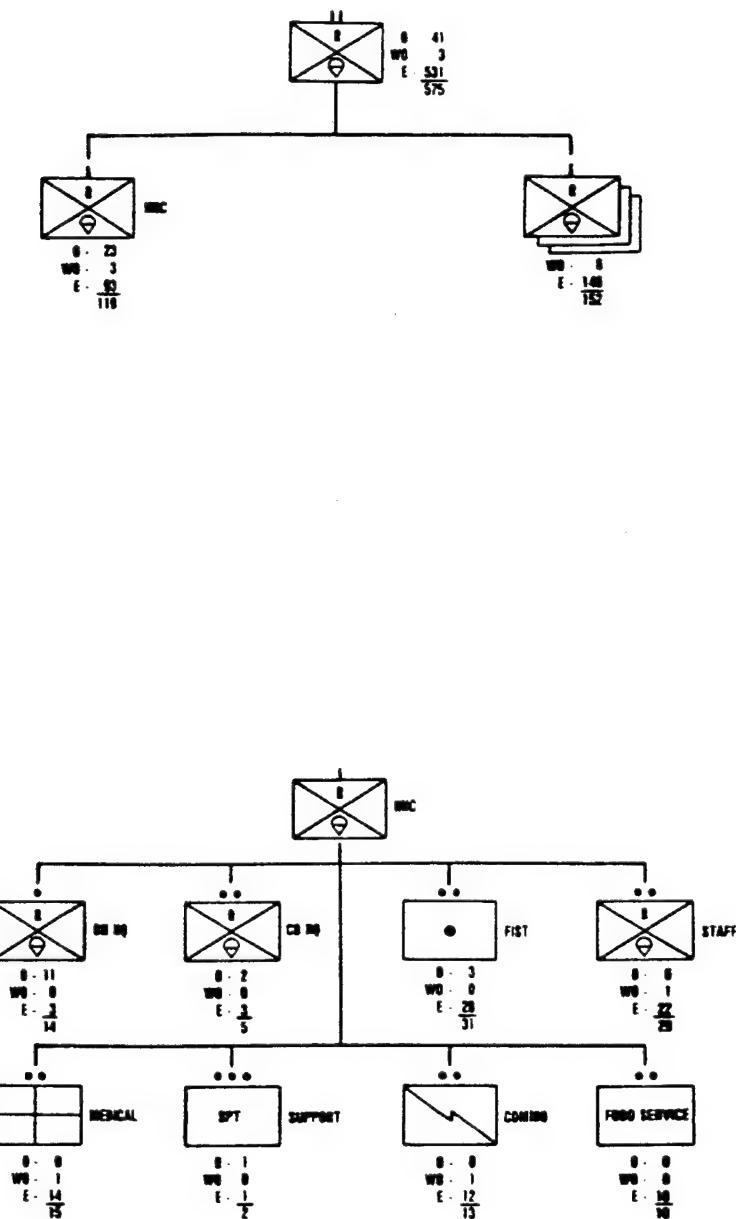


Figure 2: Current Organization of the Ranger Battalion and Headquarters Company. Source: U.S. Army. Field Manual 7-85, Ranger Unit Operations (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, June 1987), A-4.



## ABRAMS' CHARTER

THE BATTALION IS TO BE AN ELITE, LIGHT, AND THE MOST PROFICIENT INFANTRY BATTALION IN THE WORLD. A BATTALION THAT CAN DO THINGS WITH ITS HANDS AND WEAPONS BETTER THAN ANYONE.

THE BATTALION WILL CONTAIN NO "HOODLUMS OR BRIGANDS" AND IF THE BATTALION IS FORMED FROM SUCH PERSONS IT WILL BE DISBANDED.

WHEREVER THE BATTALION GOES, IT MUST BE APPARENT THAT IT IS THE BEST.

GEN CREIGHTON ABRAMS  
GUIDANCE WHEN FORMING THE  
1ST RANGER BATTALION, FALL 1973

Figure 3: General Abrams' Charter. Source: Headquarters, 75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Regiment Command Brief, Ft. Benning, GA, 1995.



## WICKHAM'S CHARTER

THE RANGER REGIMENT WILL DRAW ITS MEMBERS FROM THE ENTIRE ARMY -- AFTER SERVICE IN THE REGIMENT -- RETURN THESE MEN TO THE LINE UNITS OF THE ARMY WITH THE RANGER PHILOSOPHY AND STANDARDS.

RANGERS WILL LEAD THE WAY IN DEVELOPING TACTICS, TRAINING TECHNIQUES, AND DOCTRINE FOR THE ARMY'S LIGHT INFANTRY FORMATIONS.

THE RANGER REGIMENT WILL BE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RANGER DOCTRINE.

THE REGIMENT WILL EXPERIMENT WITH NEW EQUIPMENT TO INCLUDE OFF-THE-SHELF ITEMS AND SHARE RESULTS WITH THE LIGHT INFANTRY COMMUNITY.

GEN JOHN WICKHAM  
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY  
GUIDANCE TO COMMANDER, 75TH RANGERS  
10 MAY 1984

Figure 4: General Wickham's Charter. Source: Headquarters, 75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Regiment Command Brief, Ft. Benning, GA, 1995.



## SULLIVAN'S CHARTER

The 75th Ranger Regiment sets the standard for light infantry throughout the world. The hallmark of the Regiment is, and shall remain, the discipline and esprit of its soldiers. It should be readily apparent to any observer, friend or foe, that this is an awesome force composed of skilled, dedicated soldiers who can do things with their hands and weapons better than anyone else. The Rangers serve as the connectivity between the Army's conventional and special operational forces.

The Regiment provides the National Command Authority with a potent and responsive strike force continuously ready for worldwide deployment. The Regiment must remain capable of fighting anytime, anywhere, against any enemy, and WINNING.

As the standard-bearer for the Army, the Regiment will recruit from every sector of the active force. When a Ranger is reassigned at the completion of his tour, he will imbue his new unit with the Regiment's dauntless spirit and high standards.

The Army expects the Regiment to lead the way within the Infantry community in modernizing Ranger doctrine, tactics, techniques, and equipment to meet the challenges of the future.

The Army is unwaveringly committed to the support of the Regiment and its unique mission.

GORDON R. SULLIVAN  
General, United States Army  
Chief of Staff

Figure 5: General Gordon Sullivan's Charter. Source: Headquarters, 75th Ranger Regiment, Ranger Regiment Command Brief, Ft. Benning, GA, 1995.

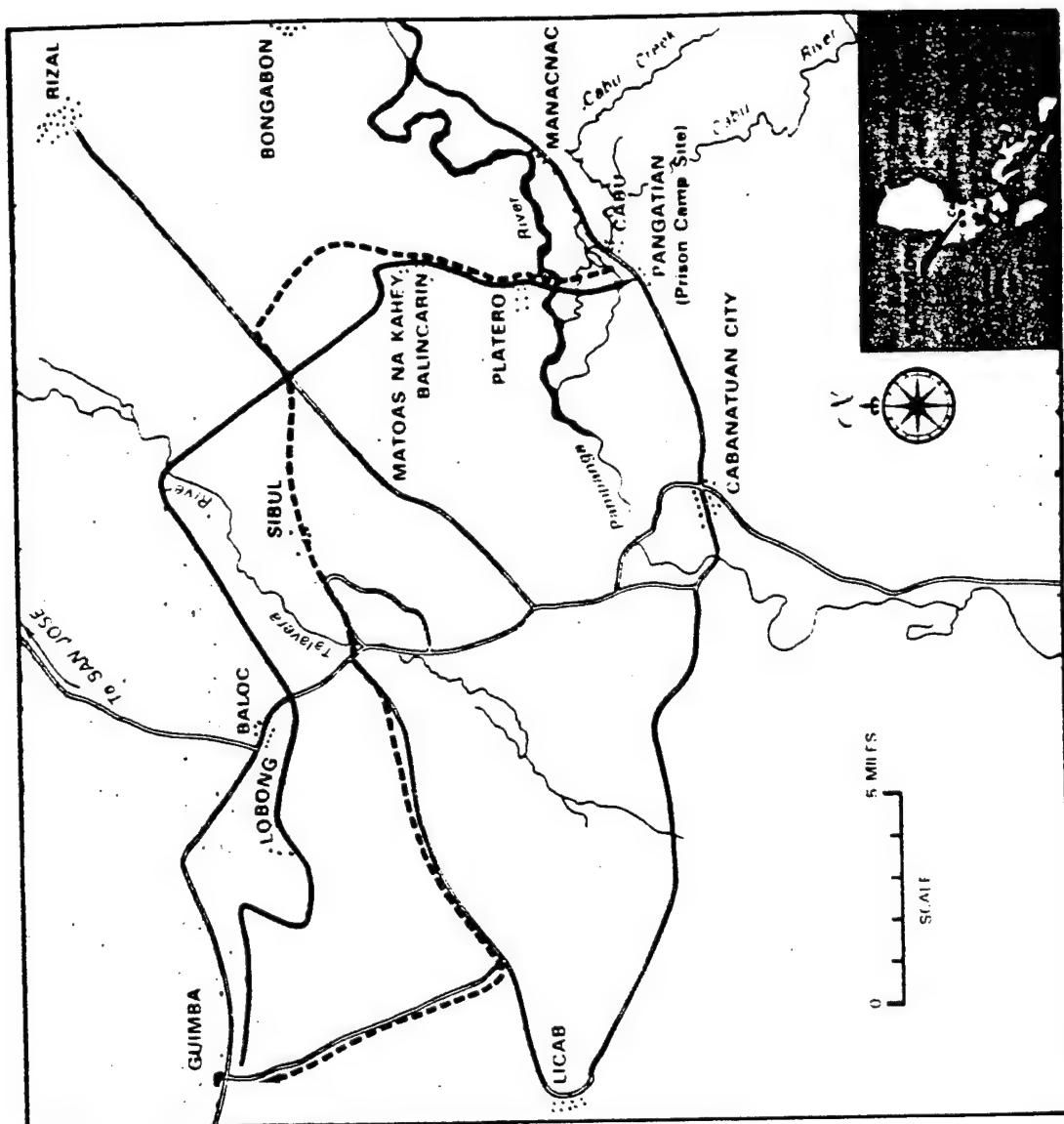


Figure 6: Map of 6th Ranger Battalion's Route to and from the Objective, Jan 1945. Source: Michael J. King, Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 59.

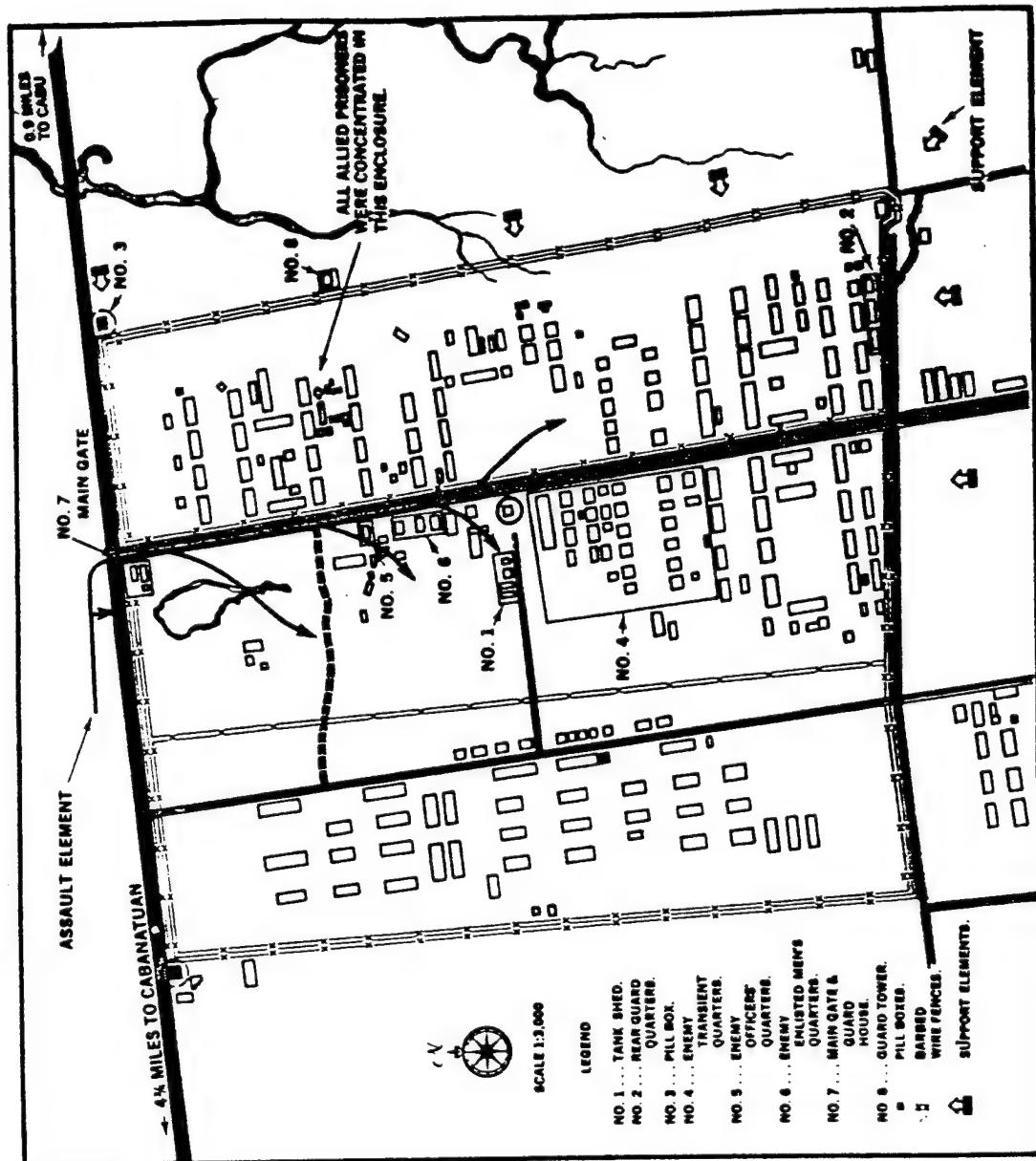


Figure 7: Cabanatuan POW Camp - Actions at the Objective, January 1945.  
Source: Michael J. King, Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 67.

## Operation Just Cause: H-Hour Targets

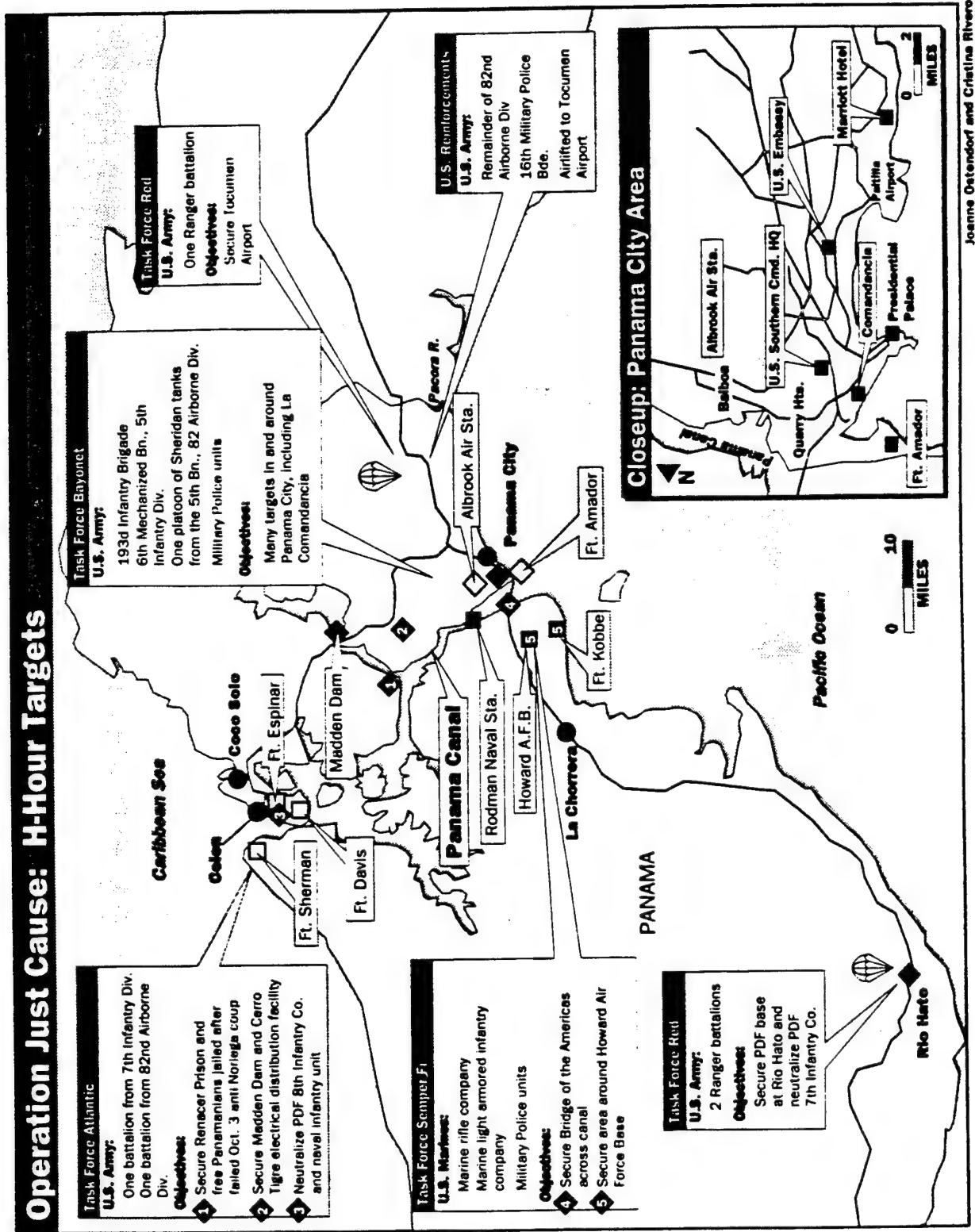
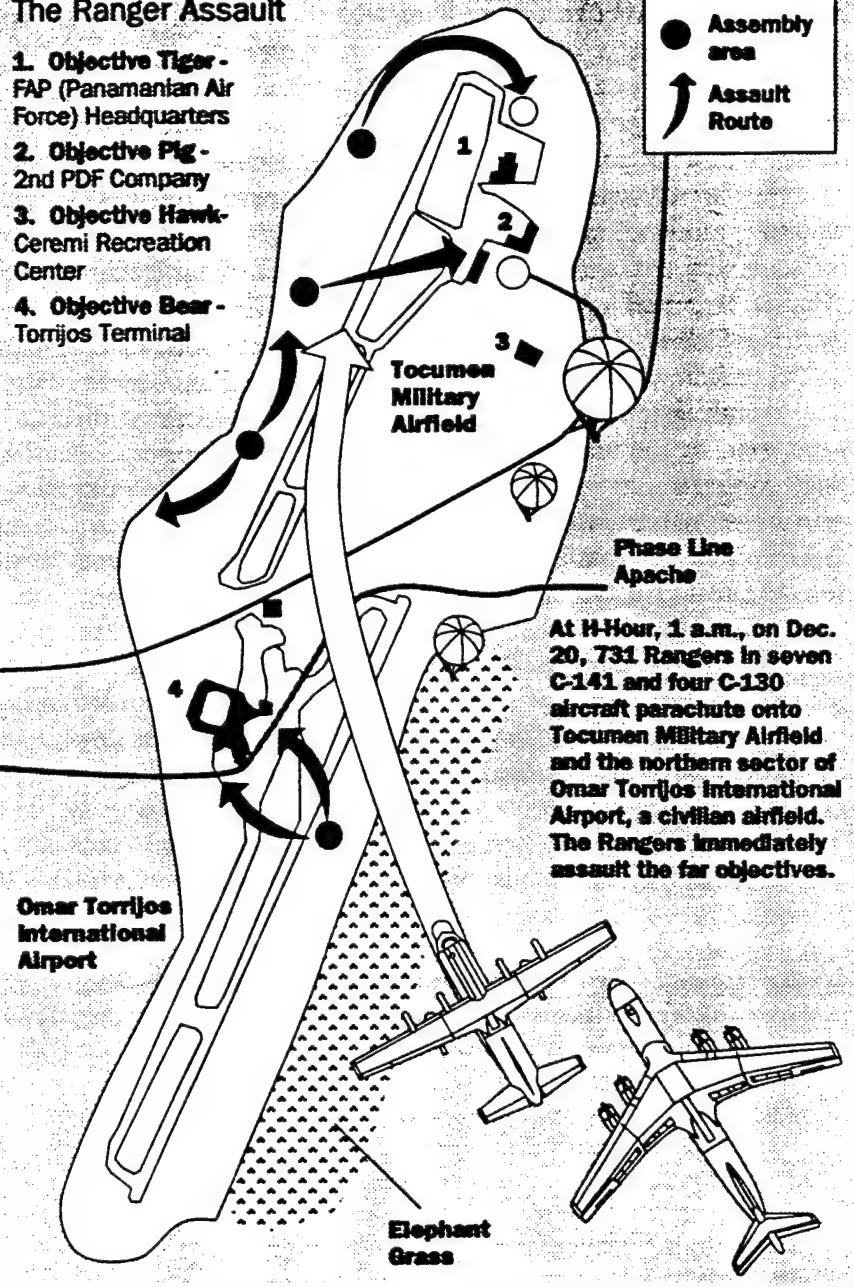


Figure 8: Map of Operation Just Cause in Panama, H-Hour Targets.  
Source: Thomas Donnelly, et al., Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 100.

## Torrijos/Tocumen: Ranger Assault

### The Ranger Assault

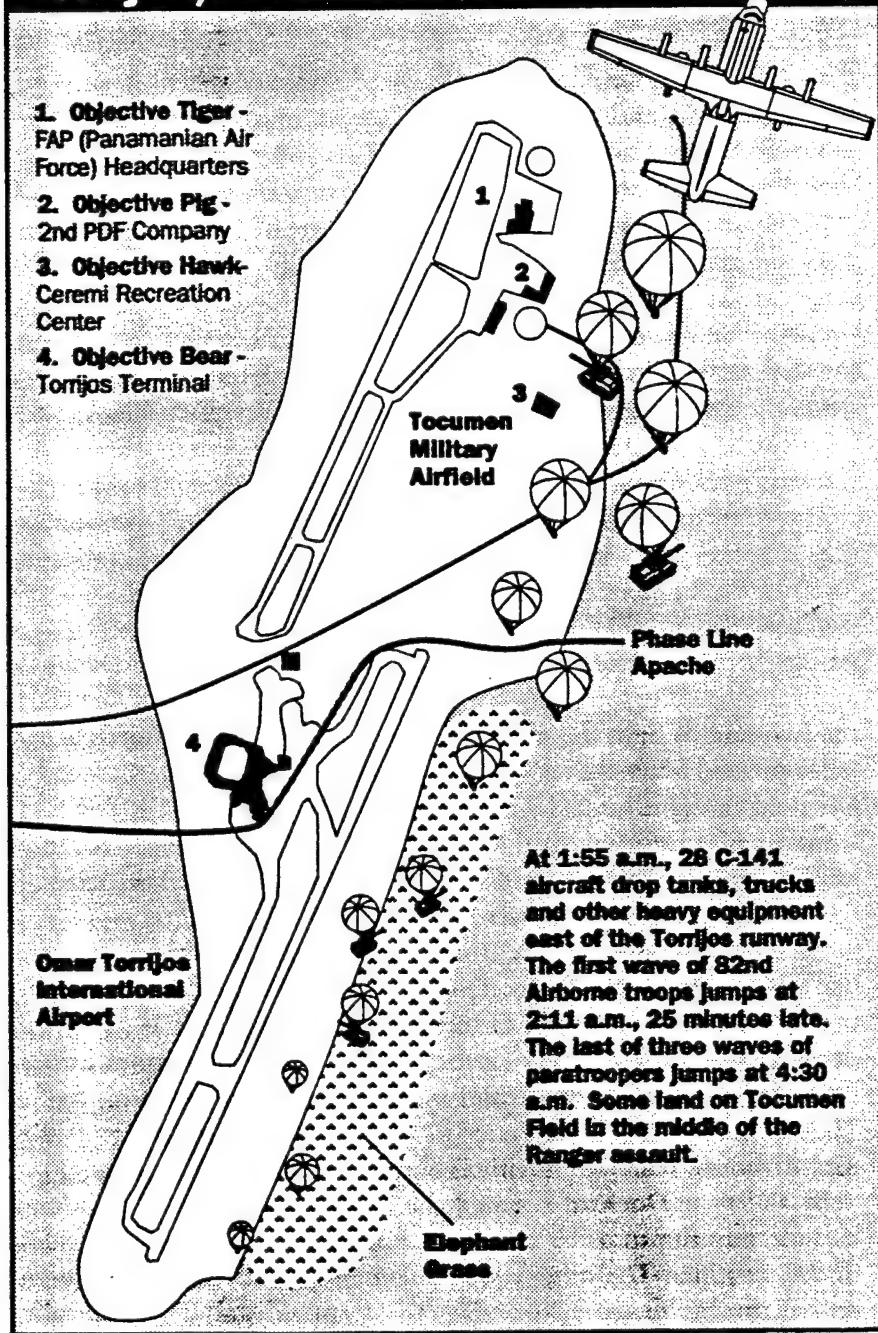
1. Objective Tiger - FAP (Panamanian Air Force) Headquarters
2. Objective Pig - 2nd PDF Company
3. Objective Hawk - Ceremi Recreation Center
4. Objective Bear - Torrijos Terminal



Joanne Ostendorf and Cristina Rivero

Figure 9: The Ranger Assault at H-Hour, 20 December 1989. Source: Thomas Donnelly, et al., Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 195.

## Torrijos/Tocumen: 82nd Arrives



Joanne Ostendorf and Cristina Rivero

Figure 10: The 82d Airborne Division Follow-on Forces at Torrijos/Tocumen. Source: Thomas Donnelly, et al., Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 195.

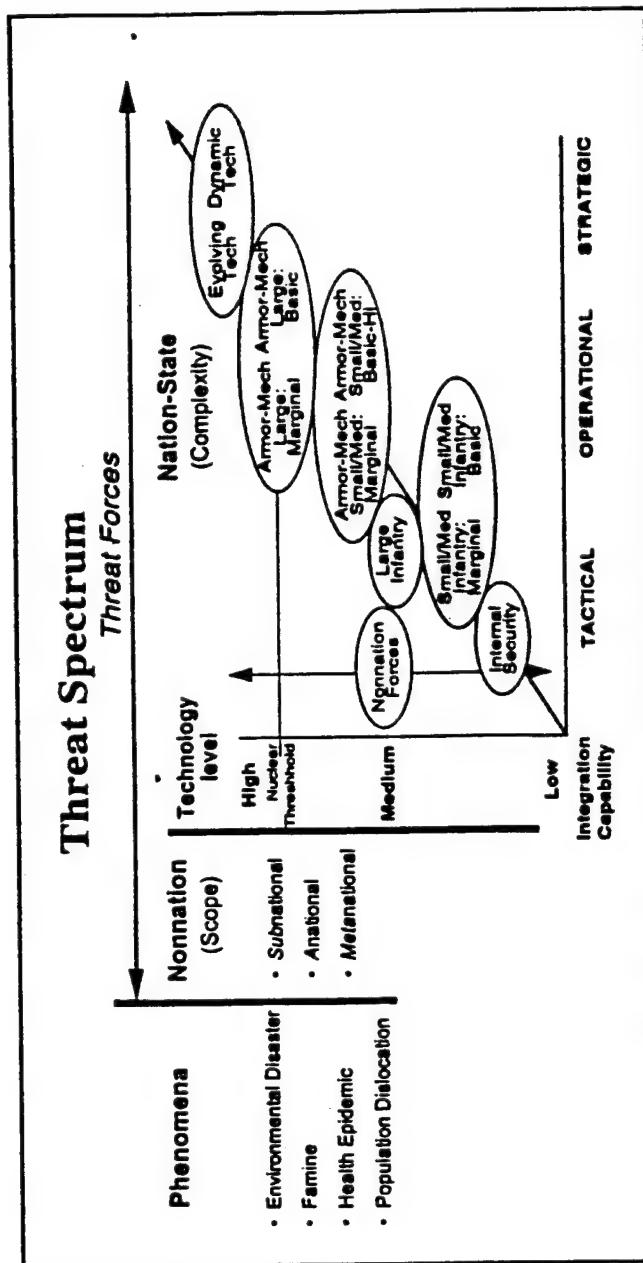


Figure 11: Threat Spectrum Model. Source: U.S. Army. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, Force XXI Operations (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1994), 2-3.

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